DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 444 029 CE 080 611

TITLE	Vocational Education Practices That Support Welfare Reform: A Compendium of Promising Practices.
INSTITUTION	Research Triangle Inst., Research Triangle Park, NC.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Vocational and Adult Education (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	2000-04-00
NOTE	297p.
CONTRACT	EA96009001
AVAILABLE FROM	ED Pubs, P.O. Box 1398, Jessup, MD 20794-1398. Tel: 877-433-7827 (Toll Free), Web site: http://www.ed.gov/pubs/edpubs.html.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC12 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Access to Education; Adult Education; Case Studies; Demonstration Programs; Economically Disadvantaged; Employment Potential; Entry Workers; Glossaries; Job Skills; *Job Training; Literature Reviews; *Role of Education; *Vocational Education; *Welfare Recipients; *Welfare Services
IDENTIFIERS	*Welfare Reform

ABSTRACT

This report focuses on key findings, recommendations, and cross-site analysis of a study of vocational education practices that support welfare reform by preparing individuals for workforce entry. An introduction describes study methodology. Chapter 2 provides an overview of differences between vocational education under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1990 as amended in 1998 (Perkins III) and vocational education and training services under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act. It describes benefits vocational education can offer to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families recepients and strategies that 12 selected programs used to increase this population's access to vocational education services. It provides recommendations to increase the role of vocational education in welfare reform. Chapters 3-7 present the cross-site analysis in which data were examined from all 12 sites, and themes were generated that correspond with the study's research questions. The analysis is based on a five-part conceptual framework consisting of program context, organizational structure, program participants and services, resources, and outcomes. Chapter 8 provides abstracts that describe each case study program, with emphasis on the most promising practices. Appendixes include a glossary and literature review on the practice of using vocational education to train and place welfare recipients into the workforce. The attached case studies comprise about one-half of the report. (YLB)

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A Compendium of Promising Practices

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April 2000

Prepared for:
Office of Vocational and Adult Education

Prepared by:
Research Triangle Institute

Under ED Contract Number EA96009001

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Prepared for:
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Prepared by:
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Becky J Hayward, Project Director

Under ED Contract Number EA96009001

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Executive Summary

Under contract to the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE), Research Triangle Institute (RTI) conducted a study of vocational education practices that support welfare reform by preparing individuals for workforce entry that leads to job retention and advancement and hence to self-sufficiency. RTI conducted case studies of 12 programs that represent a variety of approaches to using vocational education services to train and place people receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) into occupations. The result of this research, a *Compendium of Promising Practices*, documents the practices of those programs, and provides federal, state, and local decision makers with information about vocational education's contribution to effective workforce preparation.

Study Methodology

Two questions guided the design of our research:

- What training modalities work best for what population groups and under what circumstances; and
- What resources, financial and nonfinancial, are needed to support different training approaches?

To address these research questions, RTI developed a conceptual framework that included five broad categories of variables related to each case study program's:

- ***Context,*** including federal, state, and local policies and the local labor market;
- ***Organizational structure,*** including linkages between and among its host institution, collaborating agencies, and employers;
- ***Services participants receive,*** such as case management, instruction, support services, job placement, and postemployment support;
- ***Resources,*** both fiscal and personnel; and
- ***Participant and program outcomes***, including program enrollment, retention, and completion; skill mastery and credential attainment; job placement and retention; and wages, career advancement, and personal growth.

This framework served as the organizing basis for all study activities. The sidebar summarizes the activities associated with this research effort.

RTI identified prospective case study sites for this research through a literature review and input from the study's advisory group members.[1] We identified sites that were fully implemented; served individuals who received benefits from TANF funds or similar benefits supported by a separate state allocation; could provide some evidence of effectiveness; and, in the opinion of the nominator, were replicable and prepared participants for employment with career potential.[2] We then collected and compared detailed information from the most promising candidates.

Summary of Study Activities

To prepare for and conduct our research, RTI undertook several activities, including:

Establishing an Advisory Working Group comprising representatives of a variety of organizations involved in vocational education and welfare reform to provide input on programmatic issues, analysis, and dissemination of findings;

Reviewing the research on the practice of using vocational education to train and place welfare recipients into the workforce, including promising practices for training specific groups of interest;

Developing a Study Design and Analysis Plan that describes the conceptual framework for carrying out the study;

Identifying and selecting promising sites;

Conducting the case studies, which included interviews with state and local administrators, program staff, employer representatives, and participants, as well as informal observations and review of relevant documents;

Preparing case study reports, which address the five areas encompassed by the study's conceptual framework;

Conducting a cross-site analysis which examined data across programs to enhance understanding of strategies that vocational education programs may use to enhance their contribution to effective workforce preparation;

Developing recommendations for increasing the role of vocational education in welfare reform;

Preparing a Compendium of vocational education practices that support welfare reform; and

Developing a plan for dissemination of the *Compendium*.

We selected the case study sites to provide variation along a number of dimensions, including program model, geographic region, organizational structure, resources, context, and array of services. Selected programs included:

[1]The advisory group included representatives of the American Association of Community Colleges, the National Governors Association, the National Alliance of Business, and the Welfare Information Network, as well as state directors of vocational education.

[2]While we also initially hoped to identify programs supported by funding from the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Amendments of 1998 ("Perkins III"), we found no applicable programs that were primarily reliant on Perkins monies, although several programs did use federal vocational education monies to support specific activities.

- ***The Advanced Technology Program (ATP)*** at Oakland Community College in Michigan develops customized job training programs for employers that can offer starting salaries of $20,000 or more, fringe benefits and opportunities for advancement.
- ***The Center for Employment Training (CET)*** prepares participants for the local job market in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina and is one of 38 local affiliates of a national nonprofit organization based in San Jose, California.
- ***The Columbus County JobLink Career Center (JobLink),*** a one-stop career center housed at Southeastern Community College provides a variety of education and employment services to a large rural area in North Carolina.
- Ohio's ***Hospitality On-Site Training Program (HOST)*** is a collaborative effort of the state's Hotel and Lodging Association and local vocational agencies in which students are hired by participating employers before they enter the nine-month, 30-hour-a-week program.
- Goodwill Industries' ***NEW (Nontraditional Employment for Women) Choices*** in Atlanta prepares low-income women with employment barriers for nontraditional careers in the construction and building trades industry.
- Maine's ***Parents as Scholars (PaS)*** is funded by state and operated by the state's Department of Human Services and allows TANF-eligible clients to pursue postsecondary degrees.
- ***The Regional Employment Network (REN)*** of Erie County, New York, brings together 12 employment and training agencies, and is coordinated by one of the state's Adult Centers for Comprehensive Support Services (ACCESS) Centers.
- Daytona Beach Community College's ***Short-Term Job Training Programs (Short-Term Training)*** was designed in collaboration with the local Workforce Development Board and area employers to prepare welfare recipients for work in a variety of fields.
- ***St. Louis Works (SLW)***, a local affiliate of the national nonprofit organization *America Work*, recruits minorities and women, as well as other residents, who are interested in entering union apprenticeships in any of 22 building trades.
- ***Steps to Success (Steps),*** operated by Mount Hood Community College in Oregon, provides an array of services that includes six-week *Office Basics* and *Office Trek* programs that prepare clients for entry-level office positions.
- Illinois' ***Teen Parent Services (TPS),*** operated by the Department of Human Services, helps young parents receiving welfare benefits stay in school and obtain a high school diploma or equivalent.
- ***The Workforce Development Programs (Workforce Development)*** at El Paso Community College provide bilingual vocational education courses for both TANF clients and individuals who have lost their jobs due to factory closings

associated with economic changes brought about by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

We conducted both within-site and cross-site analyses in order to develop case studies and to generate themes that explained vocational education practices that support welfare reform. First, using our conceptual framework, we organized data from interviews, observations, and document review into categories of information about the context, structure, participants and services, resources, and outcomes of each program. We based individual case study reports on this within-site analysis. Second, we compared this categorical information across programs to identify common and unique program characteristics in the areas of context, structure, participants and services, resources, and outcomes. In addition, for the purpose of highlighting implications specific to the role of vocational education as defined under Perkins III (versus education and training defined under TANF), we conducted a third level of analysis. We isolated the cross-site findings directly related to Perkins-defined vocational education from the range of policies, organizations, staff, services, and resources we found to influence case study programs. Our full report contains findings from each level of analysis, including individual case studies, cross-site findings, and implications for vocational education.

Study Findings and Implications

Our research identified a number of promising practices that enable vocational education programs to contribute to effective workforce preparation.[3] The purposes of such practices are to increase the likelihood that an individual receiving public assistance will obtain a job that offers a living wage with the potential for advancement and to decrease the need for future dependence on welfare. The case study sites illustrate that vocational education services can provide TANF clients, and other participants receiving public assistance, with important benefits to which they might not otherwise have access. Such benefits include:

- ***In-depth vocational and academic assessment.*** Vocational educators providing services for case study programs typically offered specialized vocational and educational assessments for the purpose of matching participants with appropriate services to prepare them for employment. Such assessments increased the likelihood that participants would succeed in the programs they entered; familiarized clients with the requirements of particular occupations; helped students plan their studies, and educators plan instruction;

[3]Our Index of Promising Practices refers the reader to those specific case studies that had implemented these practices. This index is included at the end of our report.

and enabled educators and TANF caseworkers to monitor participants' progress so that they could identify and address problems quickly.

- ***Linkages with prospective employers and preparation for careers.*** Case study program developers solicited employer input in program development and implementation, tailored curricula to the needs of local businesses, and created instructional programs based on industry standards. These activities facilitated "buy in" from prospective employers, who provided resources such as facilities and equipment as well as internships or guaranteed placements for program graduates. Detailed knowledge of local job markets enabled staff to design programs that prepared TANF recipients for careers, rather than jobs with little potential for advancement.

- ***Instruction that combines vocational, life, and academic skills.*** Vocational educators integrated job-skill training with basic academics, such as math and literacy, and life skills for increased employability, such as punctuality, communication, grooming, problem solving, and crisis management. Case study programs used a variety of instructional strategies (such as hands-on learning and team building activities) to engage participants, which served to increase their involvement and commitment to education and training.

- ***Access to further education and training.*** Many of the programs we visited included provisions for participants to further their education through internship opportunities or sequential courses designed for employed individuals. Articulation or other affiliation with a postsecondary institution provided the added benefit of access to a variety of additional educational services (including remedial academics, basic literacy, English as a Second Language, adult secondary education, continuing education, and degree programs). This affiliation may have also reduced the stigma of welfare by enabling participants to complete an "educational" versus a "social service" program.

In addition to demonstrating the benefits that vocational educators provide to clients, the case study sites illustrate several strategies that program staff can use to maximize the role of vocational education in moving welfare recipients to work. These strategies include:

- ***Collaborating with the local welfare agency.*** Vocational educators emphasized the importance of initiating and maintaining close relationships with TANF agencies in order to develop services that meet TANF requirements. Rules associated with welfare reform, including time limits on receipt of benefits and specification of work requirements, clearly restrict participation in vocational education. However, case study programs tailored their operations, by adjusting their hours of operation and duration or combining instruction with work activities, for example, to fit the TANF constraints. In such instances, ongoing communication with TANF agency staff helped educators remain current with changing welfare policies in order to adapt training and education programs to maximize client participation.

- ***Participating in intersector partnerships.*** Case study programs collaborated with other agencies and with the private sector to make an array of services available to participants. As a result of such partnerships, social services found access to education services for clients, employers found workers, educators gained program participants, and clients received training and education services, as well as employment. Respondents noted that all partners contributed resources to the collaborative effort — contributions from multiple agencies allowed programs to blend funds from a variety of sources, and therein to support a diverse range of program components. Ongoing communication (promoted through joint task forces and boards, shared electronic information systems, and cross-sector facilities) both sustained interagency partnerships and improved the efficiency and effectiveness of service provision. A team approach to service delivery, including the client as a team member, facilitated mutual feedback on progress and joint decision making about goals among clients, staff, and employers.
- ***Attending and responding to the context surrounding welfare reform and workforce development.*** The leaders of promising programs had designed services that were aligned with the contexts surrounding welfare reform and workforce development. Programs were aligned with the goals of community economic development initiatives, the needs of local employers, and the mandates of TANF. Leaders were also actively involved in political and other processes that shaped the environment within which they worked.

Based on our review of program practices and cross-site comparison of common elements of success, we recommend that vocational educators consider the actions that staff from our case study programs took to provide services for the TANF population and adapt a similarly proactive stance toward increasing the role of vocational education in welfare reform. We conclude by summarizing recommendations based on exemplary strategies for achieving this:

Establish and maintain close linkages with TANF

- Initiate and maintain productive relationships with local TANF agencies.
- Seek assistance from TANF staff to understand and stay abreast of TANF requirements.
- Adapt education programs to meet TANF restrictions so that more clients will be able to participate.
- Work with TANF agencies to identify all clients with education needs, including individuals who are at risk for entry or re-entry into the welfare system.
- Work with TANF agencies to fund such services for a broader population with money that may become available for prevention or retention.

- Offer a sequence of courses that provides training and education both pre- and post-employment.

Participate in intersector partnerships

- Identify, join, or create interagency groups, advisory boards, service provider teams or other mechanisms for communicating across sectors involved in welfare reform and workforce development.
- Communicate with other organizations to increase their awareness of vocational education assessment and instructional services.
- Offer assessment services to identify needs and courses to meet the specific needs of TANF clients. Work with TANF caseworkers to inform clients of training and education options, so that clients can enter programs that match their interests and skills.
- Work with employers to identify their hiring and training needs.
- Work with partners to identify a variety of funding sources and other resources to support employment preparation. Determine what each sector can contribute in terms of services, support, and in-kind resources. Be willing to contribute education resources.
- Communicate on a regular basis with other service providers with whom educators have a common caseload. Involve other providers in decision making about participants' education plans.

Attend and respond to the context surrounding welfare reform and workforce development

- Identify and become involved in local economic development initiatives. Communicate with leaders about the role, or potential role, for vocational education in those initiatives.
- Track and consider the impact of political trends and policy changes that influence welfare reform and workforce development. Anticipate changes in the profile of potential vocational education participants, including individuals receiving public assistance.
- Work with other public agencies and with employers to predict the changing demand for vocational education. Respond to such changes, including, for example, the service needs of harder-to-serve clients, through programs of instruction that combine vocational, life, and academic skills and offer access to further education and training.

Chapter 1
Introduction

Under contract to the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE), Research Triangle Institute (RTI) conducted a study of vocational education practices that support welfare reform by preparing individuals for workforce entry that leads to job retention and advancement and hence to self-sufficiency. RTI conducted case studies of 12 programs that represented a variety of approaches to using vocational education services to train and place people receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) into occupations. This *Compendium* documents the practices of those programs, and provides federal, state, and local decision makers with information about vocational education's contribution to effective workforce preparation.

The case studies showed that vocational education services can provide TANF clients with important benefits to which they might not otherwise have access, including in-depth vocational and educational assessment; linkages with employers; instruction that combines vocational, life, and academic skills; and opportunities for further education and training. Our research also identified a variety of strategies that program staff can use to maximize the role of vocational education in moving welfare recipients to work. These strategies include collaborating with the local welfare agency, participating in intersector partnerships, and attending and responding to the context surrounding welfare reform and workforce development.

Study Methodology

In this section, we describe the activities we undertook to address the study's research questions, which included:

- What training modalities work best for what population groups and under what circumstances; and
- What resources, financial and nonfinancial, are needed to support different training approaches?

We also describe the conceptual framework that guided the case studies and the cross-site analysis, and outline the procedures we followed to select the case study sites.

Study Activities

To address the research questions, RTI undertook several activities, including:

- ***Establishing an Advisory Working Group*** comprising representatives of a variety of organizations involved in vocational education and welfare reform to provide input on programmatic issues, analysis, and dissemination of findings;[1]
- ***Reviewing the research*** on uses of vocational education to train and place welfare recipients into the workforce, including promising practices for training specific groups of interest[2];
- ***Developing a Study Design and Analysis Plan*** that described the conceptual framework for carrying out the study;
- ***Identifying and selecting promising sites***;
- ***Conducting the case studies,*** which included interviews with state and local administrators, program staff, employer representatives, and participants, as well as informal observations and review of relevant documents;
- ***Preparing case study reports***, which address the five areas encompassed by the study's conceptual framework (program context, organizational structure, program participants and services, resources, and outcomes);
- ***Conducting a cross-site analysis*** within each of these five areas;
- ***Developing recommendations*** for increasing the role of vocational education in welfare reform;
- ***Preparing a Compendium*** of vocational education practices that support welfare reform; and
- ***Developing a plan for dissemination of the Compendium***.

Conceptual Framework

As documented in the *Study Design and Analysis Plan,*[3] RTI developed a conceptual framework for the study that included five broad categories of variables related to:

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[1]See Appendix A for a list of Advisory Working Group members.

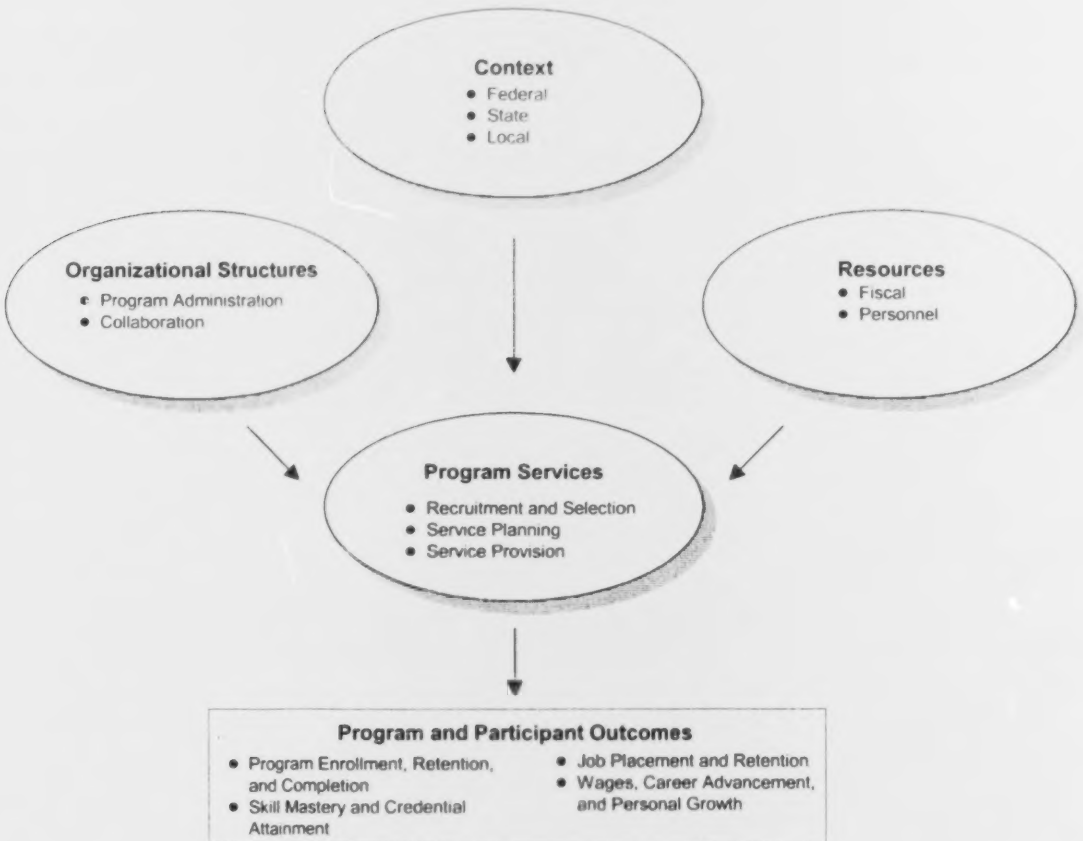
[2]See Appendix B for a summary of information obtained through the literature review.

[3]Research Triangle Institute (1999). *Vocational education practices that support welfare reform. Study design and analysis plan.* Research Triangle Park, NC: Research Triangle Institute.

- ***The program's context,*** including federal, state, and local policies and the local labor market;
- ***The program's organizational structure,*** including linkages among its host institution, collaborating agencies, and employers;
- ***Services participants receive,*** such as case management, instruction, support services, job placement, and postemployment support;
- ***Resources*** that support the program; and
- ***Participant and program outcomes***.

Exhibit 1 is a visual depiction of the framework, which served as the organizing basis for the individual case studies and for the cross-site analysis.

Exhibit 1. Vocational Education Practices That Support Welfare Reform: Framework of Variables for Investigation



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Site Selection

Through the literature review, RTI researchers identified three approaches that state and local programs could use to provide vocational education services to people receiving welfare benefits, including providing vocational education services: (1) as a stand-alone work activity, (2) in combination with other work activities, or (3) after employment. The review also described a number of programs that we identified as possible candidates for the study. These programs illustrated each of the three approaches, and were housed in states that varied both in their definition of "vocational education and training" and in their approach to targeting services and combining work and vocational education.

To augment this group of candidate sites, we sought input from the study's advisory group, which included representatives of the American Association of Community Colleges, the National Governors Association, the National Alliance of Business, and the Welfare Information Network, as well as state directors of vocational education. Group members provided input on the sites identified through the literature review and recommended other promising programs. One also solicited additional nominations from state directors of vocational education through electronic mail. We asked nominators to recommend programs that:

- Were fully implemented (i.e., had a complete staff and were serving clients);
- Served individuals who received benefits from TANF funds (or similar benefits supported by a separate state allocation);[4]
- Could provide some evidence of effectiveness in terms of employment, reduced dependence on welfare, and attainment of education skills/certification;
- Owed their success (in the view of the nominator) to activities or components that could be replicated elsewhere; and
- Used vocational education to prepare participants for employment with career potential (versus, for example, programs that offer job search or employability skill-building alone).

In addition to these nomination criteria, we initially hoped to identify programs whose services found support from funding, and therein met the definition of vocational education, associated with the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Amendments of 1998 ("Perkins III"). This definition includes organized educational activities that:

[4]Only one of the selected programs, Maine's Parents as Scholars, used a separate state allocation.

- ***Offer a sequence of courses*** that provides individuals with the academic and technical knowledge and skills the individuals need to prepare for further education and for careers. . .in current or emerging employment sectors; and
- ***Include competency-based applied learning*** that contributes to the academic knowledge, higher-order reasoning and problem-solving skills, work attitudes, general employability skills, technical skills, and occupation-specific skills, of an individual (Section 3(29)).

We quickly found, however, that — while many programs that provide vocational education services to TANF clients emphasize preparation for careers in viable employment sectors and include linkages to additional educational services — they do not necessarily comply with all aspects of the formal definition[5] and are not primarily reliant on Perkins monies.[6] A number of the selected programs did, however, use federal vocational education monies to support specific activities, and, given OVAE's interest in how vocational education funds might be used to support welfare reform in the future, we did not restrict nominated programs to those that received federal vocational education funds.

To identify 12 programs for case study, we collected detailed information from the most promising candidates, including information regarding:

- Whether the program provided vocational education (1) as a stand-alone work activity; (2) in combination with other work activities; or (3) after employment;
- Agencies and organizations involved in the program (such as welfare and education agencies, nonprofit organizations, community colleges, and businesses) and their respective roles;
- Characteristics of targeted participants (such as individuals who have high school diplomas and/or work experience versus those classified as hard-to-serve, individuals with limited English proficiency, and those in rural areas);
- Major program activities (such as basic skills instruction, occupationally specific training, support services, pre- and postemployment services) and how they were coordinated to provide an integrated program;
- Type of employment for which participants are trained;

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[5]For a discussion of the differences between vocational education under Perkins and vocational education and training under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), please see Chapter 2: Vocational Education Under PRWORA.

[6]In fact, most programs relied on and, at least in part, attributed their success to their ability to use funds from a variety of sources. For a more in-depth discussion of this practice, please see Chapter 6: Cross-Site Analysis—Resources.

- Ways in which the program uses technology to deliver vocational education and training services; and
- Any evaluation activities that the program had undertaken.

The resulting group of 12 programs provided variation along a number of dimensions, including program model, geographic region, organizational structure, resources, context, and array of services. They included:

- ***The Advanced Technology Program (ATP)*** at Oakland Community College in Michigan, which develops customized job training programs for employers that can offer starting salaries of $20,000 or more, as well as fringe benefits and opportunities for advancement. ATP serves TANF clients who score at the 10th grade level or higher on the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) reading test. In order to comply with state requirements, participants work for 20 hours a week while attending class for about 35 hours a week.
- ***The Center for Employment Training (CET)*** in North Carolina, one of 38 local affiliates of a national nonprofit organization based in San Jose, California. Located in a labor market with many highly skilled and educated workers, the center offers TANF recipients and underskilled individuals an opportunity to obtain vocational training that addresses the entry-level needs of the diverse business community, which includes multi-national research, telecommunications, and pharmaceutical firms. CET offers training in four areas (Shipping and Handling, Automated Office Skills, Medical Billing, and Electronics Technology), using a simulated work environment, over a period of seven to 10 months. Center staff assist program completers in obtaining jobs that will pay them a living wage and allow them to pursue additional training.
- ***The Columbus County Joblink Career Center (Joblink),*** a one-stop career center housed at Southeastern Community College in North Carolina. Serving a large rural area, JobLink offers a variety of services (including short-term vocational training programs both prior to and after employment) to county residents seeking employment or advancement; between 10 and 25 percent of its customers are welfare recipients. In 1998, the center received a U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) welfare-to-work grant to operate *Ladder to Success,* a program for hard-to-serve TANF clients.
- Ohio's ***Hospitality On-Site Training Program (HOST),*** a collaborative effort of the state's Hotel and Lodging Association and local vocational agencies. Students are hired by participating employers before they enter the nine-month, 30-hour-a-week program, which prepares them for a variety of positions in the hospitality industry, including front desk clerk, switchboard operator, and cook.
- Goodwill Industries' ***NEW (Nontraditional Employment for Women) Choices*** in Atlanta, which prepares low-income women with employment barriers for

nontraditional careers in the construction and building trades industry. The 40-hour-a-week program includes vocational skills, job readiness, and life skills training; instruction in trades math; physical conditioning; and job placement and other pre- and postemployment support services. About half of its students are welfare recipients.

- Maine's ***Parents as Scholars (PaS)***, operated by the state's Department of Human Services, which allows TANF-eligible clients to pursue postsecondary degrees. Using state maintenance-of-effort funds, Maine provides individuals who meet TANF eligibility requirements with comparable benefits while they pursue two- and four-year degrees at institutions throughout the state.

- ***The Regional Employment Network (REN)*** of Erie County, New York, which brings together 12 employment and training agencies. Coordinated by one of the state's Adult Centers for Comprehensive Support Services (ACCESS) Centers,[7] REN employs a shared information system to permit clients who enter the system at any point to be referred to the most appropriate services, regardless of which provider offers them.

- Daytona Beach Community College's ***Short-Term Job Training Programs (Short-Term Training)***, designed in collaboration with the local Workforce Development Board and area employers. The programs, which range from four to 32 weeks in length, prepare welfare recipients for work in a variety of fields, including building maintenance, computer repair technology, polyester reinforced fiberglass manufacturing, and customer service.

- ***St. Louis Works (SLW)***, a local affiliate of the national nonprofit organization *America Works*, which is closely linked with economic development efforts in the St. Louis area. SLW recruits minorities and women, as well as other residents, who are interested in entering union apprenticeships in any of 22 building trades (although most participants to date have entered the carpenters' program). The program provides participants with a brief orientation to the building trades and offers tutoring assistance for those who need help in passing its entry-level math test.

- ***Steps to Success (Steps)***, operated by Mount Hood Community College in Oregon, which is the primary contractor for the area's JOBS program. *Steps* serves more than 12,000 welfare applicants and recipients per year, providing an array of services that includes vocational training. Its six-week *Office Basics* and *Office Trek* programs prepare clients for entry-level office positions.

- Illinois' ***Teen Parent Services (TPS)***, operated by the Department of Human Services, which is designed to help young parents receiving welfare benefits stay in school and obtain a high school diploma or equivalent. The program, recognized as a model for statewide services to teens, depends on strong interagency relationships to provide teen parents with coordinated health and welfare services. Under the state's new

[7] New York's ACCESS Centers were established by the state's Departments of Education, Labor, and Social Services to provide comprehensive services to adults.

"broad-based service coordination" approach, one case manager serves all members of a family.

- ***The Workforce Development Programs (Workforce Development)*** at El Paso Community College, which serve both TANF clients and individuals who have lost their jobs due to factory closings associated with economic changes brought about by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Most participants are Hispanic women between the ages of 30 and 50 who have less than a sixth-grade education and limited proficiency in English. The college works closely with the local workforce development board to provide five- to six-month courses that combine job training and basic skills to prepare participants for work in computer operations and basic adult care, and bilingual job skill training in computers, plastics, electricity, basic adult care, and child care.

Data Collection and Analysis

RTI researchers conducted site visits to each of the 12 selected programs. We interviewed program administrators, staff, and participants on site, as well as employers and representatives from collaborating agencies. During the visits we also observed program activities, such as instruction and planning sessions, and facilities, including multi-agency career centers, job search libraries, and computer labs. Administrators and staff provided us with brochures, course catalogs, instructional materials, written policies, and other documents that were relevant to their programs. In addition to the visits, we conducted telephone interviews to collect information from state-level administrators and other respondents who were not available on site. We compiled data from these various sources per case study program — interviews, observations, and documents — in preparation for data analysis.

We conducted both within-site and cross-site analyses in order to develop case studies and to generate themes that explained vocational education practices that support welfare reform. First, using our conceptual framework, we organized data into categories of information about the context, structure, participants and services, resources, and outcomes of each program. We based individual case study reports on this within-site analysis. Second, we compared this categorical information across programs to identify common and unique program characteristics in the areas of context, structure, participants and services, resources, and outcomes. In addition, for the purpose of highlighting implications specific to the role of vocational education as defined under Perkins III (versus education and training defined under TANF), we conducted a third level of analysis. We isolated the cross-site findings directly related to Perkins-defined vocational education from the range of policies, organizations, staff, services, and resources we found to influence case study programs. This report contains findings from each level of

analysis, including individual case studies, cross-site findings, and implications for vocational education.

Organization of This Report

This report consists of two volumes. The present volume focuses on our key findings, recommendations, and cross-site analysis, while Volume II provides more in-depth information regarding each case study site.

In ***Chapter 2*** of this volume, we provide the reader with an introduction to the differences between vocational education under Perkins III and vocational education and training services as generally delivered under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act (PRWORA). We then describe the benefits that vocational education can offer to TANF clients and the strategies that the 12 selected programs used to increase the access of this population to vocational education services. We conclude this chapter by providing recommendations for increasing the role of vocational education in welfare reform.

Chapters 3 through 7 present our cross-site analysis in which we examine data from all 12 sites and generate themes that correspond with the study's research questions. The analysis is based on our five-part conceptual framework and, thus, addresses: Program Context (***Chapter 3***), Organizational Structure (***Chapter 4***), Program Participants and Services (***Chapter 5***), Resources (***Chapter 6***), and Outcomes (***Chapter 7***).

Our last chapter, ***Chapter 8,*** provides abstracts that describe each of the 12 case study programs, with an emphasis on their most promising practices. We follow the text with a ***Glossary*** of key terms and an ***Index*** that provides references to key programs from which readers may learn more about the various promising practices outline in our report. We conclude our report with three appendices: ***Appendix A*** lists the members of the Advisory Working Group; ***Appendix B*** describes the results of our review of literature on the practice of using vocational education to train and place welfare recipients into the workforce; and ***Appendix C*** provides extended Exhibits that outline the agencies involved in each program and the services they offer.

Chapter 2
Vocational Education Under PRWORA

We begin this report by describing the larger context in which vocational education systems interact with TANF to address welfare reform and work development issues. Among the most critical contextual factors influencing service delivery were the differences between vocational education and TANF policies, funding, and priorities. Although the vocational education approach to reducing dependence on public assistance did not match welfare reform's emphasis on "work first," we found that such services had much to offer TANF clients and TANF agencies. Case study programs helped participants acquire well-paying jobs with career potential, thereby increasing the likelihood that such participants would retain employment and no longer depend on public assistance. In order to emphasize the influence of contextual issues on program practices, this chapter:

- ***Compares vocational education under Perkins III*** with "vocational education and training" as delivered under PRWORA;
- ***Describes the ways in which vocational education programs benefit TANF clients***;
- ***Describes strategies*** program staff have used to maximize the role of vocational education in helping TANF clients successfully transition off welfare; and
- ***Provides recommendations*** for vocational educators who wish to increase their role in welfare reform.

Vocational Education Under Perkins III and PRWORA

As indicated in the introduction to this report, our case study programs offered services that meet aspects of the Perkins definition of vocational education. Our analysis of case study data, along with a careful examination of Perkins III, reveals a number of reasons why services under PRWORA do not always meet the full definition of vocational education, and federal vocational education funds do not generally support complete programs of study for TANF clients.

First, the Perkins legislation calls for states to develop programs that — while they are accessible to special populations — are designed to serve a wide variety of individuals who elect

to participate. It also specifies that states and local programs must use their funds to address a variety of specific purposes, including providing ". . .a coherent sequence of courses" that links the secondary and postsecondary levels. Programs that receive federal vocational education funds are evaluated according to their performance on the "core indicators" contained in Perkins III, including student attainment of state-developed academic proficiencies and receipt of secondary and postsecondary credentials and degrees.

In contrast, the statute that governs TANF programs (PRWORA) is concerned solely with the needs of economically disadvantaged parents of young children. Under this legislation, vocational education and training services usually focus on helping participants obtain employment within a relatively short time frame. Although state and local programs have considerable flexibility in deciding how to use their federal funds, they are constrained by the need to comply with "work participation" rates. These requirements limit the number of TANF clients who can be involved in vocational education and training, as well as the length of time that they can receive such services.

Exhibit 2 provides a summary of the differences between the "vocational education" programs generally supported by Perkins funds and the "vocational education and training"[1] services authorized under PRWROA. In the remainder of this section, we discuss those differences in greater detail.

Education and training services. Under Perkins III, vocational education programs are designed and implemented solely by secondary and postsecondary schools such as community and technical colleges (and, less commonly, four-year colleges and universities or proprietary schools). Under PRWORA, on the other hand, agencies that provide vocational education and training services include not only educational institutions, but also a variety of other entities, including nonprofit community organizations. Rather than designing and providing education and training services themselves, welfare agencies may delegate this responsibility to a local educational institution or Workforce Investment Board (WIB).

Vocational education programs receiving Perkins funds generally last at least 12 months (e.g., those that culminate in award of one-year skill certificates); those that incorporate linkages between the secondary and postsecondary levels (e.g., tech prep) may encompass four or more years of study. Federal legislation specifies that they must prepare students for either careers or

[1]Instead of referring to "vocational education," PRWORA refers to "vocational educational training."

Exhibit 2. Vocational Education Under Perkins III and PRWORA

PERKINS III	PRWORA
Education and Training and Other Services	
Coherent sequences of courses (one to four or more years in duration) that provide the academic and technical knowledge needed for further education and careers and prepare students for high-skill, high-wage jobs. Emphasis is on competency-based applied learning that contributes to academic knowledge, higher-order reasoning and problem-solving skills, technical skills, and occupation-specific skills. Career guidance and academic counseling, work-related experience, job search assistance, training for nontraditional employment.	Up to 12 months of vocational educational training, on-the-job training, job skills training directly related to employment, education directly related to employment (applicable only to individuals without secondary credentials) and, postsecondary completion (applicable only to teen parents). Case management (including service planning, assessment of skills and interests, and counseling), and support services (including child care, transportation, health care, substance abuse treatment, life skills training, and assistance with job search and placement).
Service Providers	
Secondary and postsecondary educational institutions (including community and technical colleges, proprietary schools, and four-year institutions).	Various agencies, including secondary and postsecondary educational institutions and nonprofit community organizations. Programs may be designed and coordinated by the TANF agency or another entity such as the local Workforce Investment Board or community college.
Target Population	
Secondary and postsecondary students who elect to enroll in vocational and technical programs. Programs must provide equal access to special populations, including individuals who have disabilities, are from economically disadvantaged families, are preparing for nontraditional training and employment, are single parents or displaced homemakers, or have other barriers to educational achievement.	Low-income families with dependent children eligible for TANF benefits under state or local rules. TANF recipients are primarily women who are single parents and many lack a secondary credential. Individuals engaged in vocational education training (including teen parents) may not account for more than 30 percent of TANF recipients counted as "working" (please see "Accountability" below).
Funding	
Perkins funds provide only a small percentage of the total cost of operating vocational programs; these funds must be used for specified purposes which include supporting programs that integrate academic and vocational education, provide experience in all aspects of an industry, and link secondary and postsecondary education.	Decisions about spending for vocational education and training are made by state and local TANF agencies.
Accountability	
States must meet agreed-upon levels of performance on Perkins III's "core indicators," which include: • Attainment of state-established academic, vocational and technical, and skill proficiencies. • Attainment of secondary school diploma or equivalent, secondary proficiency credentials, or postsecondary degree or credential. • Participation in or completion of postsecondary education or training, military service, or employment. States may also select additional indicators.	States must involve 35 percent of all TANF families, and 90 percent of two-parent families, in work activities (including up to 12 months of vocational education and training) for 25 hours a week. Federal data collection requirements under PRWORA require states to report the status of families receiving assistance (including participation in work activities) and reasons why families leave the program. As partners in the one-stop system, DOL welfare-to-work programs help determine state performance on WIA's "core indicators," which include: • Entry into, and retention in, unsubsidized employment; • Earnings; and • Attainment of credentials documenting educational or occupational skills.

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further education, incorporating not only employment-related training but also "academic knowledge (and) higher-order reasoning and problem-solving skills" (Section (3)(29)(B)). Finally, state plans must describe how programs will prepare students for high-skill, high-wage jobs.

Unlike vocational education, most publicly funded employment training programs have historically offered short-term services focused on specific occupations. PRWORA, however, authorizes state and local programs to support both education and training services. The statute, which refers to "vocational educational training," specifies that individuals may receive such services for no more than 12 months. By law, welfare agencies may allow only a relatively small percentage of their clients to participate in such activities: those who do may account for no more than 30 percent of clients counted as working.[2] In practice, many states and local programs establish even more stringent limitations. At the time of our site visits, for example, Michigan supported only postemployment training; in New York, each local Department of Social Services made its own decisions about program design and services.

The programs we visited had found a number of creative ways to allow participants to extend their education; for example, by offering sequential courses, both pre- and postemployment; incorporating on-the-job training; or using state funds to enable some participants to pursue two- and four-year degrees. Nevertheless, TANF agency policies usually require participants to find employment quickly. Further, the personal needs and preferences of some clients prevent them from spending an extended amount of time in education or training before beginning work.

Target population. Although vocational education programs under Perkins must provide equal access to special populations, they are generally designed to serve a wide variety of individuals who elect to participate. (Some experts, in fact, view vocational education as a school reform strategy that has an even broader target population, benefitting all students by making instruction more applicable to daily life.)

Under PRWORA, vocational education and training services must be designed to address the specific academic and personal needs of TANF clients (primarily young women who are single parents). Since many of these individuals have less than a 12th grade education, some postsecondary vocational courses (most of which are part of one- or two-year programs) may not be suitable for them. Without adequate secondary-level preparation, some students may need

[2]This percentage includes teen parents, who must be enrolled in secondary school in order to receive TANF benefits.

tutoring or remedial services to meet the entrance criteria that many vocational programs establish (e.g., achieving a passing score on an entry-level math test). Finally, vocational education and training programs for TANF recipients often need to incorporate specialized components such as life skills and employability development, support services, and postemployment services.

Funding. Perkins III, while permitting states to use federal funds for a variety of purposes, also specifies that they must support programs that include a "coherent sequence of courses" that integrates academic and vocational education, provides experience in all aspects of an industry, and links secondary and postsecondary education. At the institutional level, Perkins funds usually cover only a very small proportion of program total costs; postsecondary schools use these monies primarily for supplemental services, career counseling and guidance, and purchase of materials and equipment (Muraskin, Hollinger, and Harvey, 1994). PRWORA, on the other hand, leaves decisions about allocation of block grants (including spending for vocational education and training) almost entirely to state and local TANF agencies, which may use federal funds ". . .in any manner that is reasonably calculated to accomplish the purpose of (the legislation)" (Section 404(a)(1)).

Accountability. Postsecondary vocational education programs must achieve agreed-upon levels of performance on the "core indicators" contained in Perkins III, which include students':

- Attainment of state-established academic, vocational and technical, and skill proficiences;
- Attainment of a secondary school diploma or equivalent, secondary proficiency credentials, or postsecondary degree or credential; and
- Participation in or completion of postsecondary education or training, military service, or employment.

Under PRWORA, TANF agencies strive to meet "work participation" rates that, at the time of our site visits, required them to involve 35 percent of all families, and 90 percent of two-parent families, in work activities for up to 25 hours a week. These activities include the following (although the definition of each activity is left to the individual state):

- Unsubsidized employment;
- Subsidized private sector employment;

- Subsidized public sector employment;
- Work experience;
- On-the-job training;
- Job search and job readiness assistance;
- Community service programs;
- Up to 12 months of vocational educational training;
- Job skills training directly related to employment;
- Education directly related to employment, in the case of a recipient who has not received a high school diploma or a certificate of high school equivalency;
- Satisfactory attendance at secondary school or in a course of study leading to a certificate of general equivalence, in the case of a recipient who has not completed secondary school or received such a certificate; and
- The provision of child care services to an individual who is participating in a community service program (Section 407(d)(1-12)).

Benefits of Vocational Education for TANF Clients

The constraints that PRWORA imposes, as well as the personal needs and preferences of some individuals receiving benefits under the statute, make it impossible for most TANF clients to participate in many vocational education programs. As the case studies in ***Volume II*** of this report illustrate, however, some programs have found innovative ways to increase this population's access to vocational education services.[3] By doing so, they have provided participants with several important benefits, including:

- In-depth vocational and academic assessment;
- Linkages with prospective employers and preparation for careers;
- Instruction that combines vocational, life, and academic skills; and
- Access to further education and training.

Vocational and academic assessment. In the programs we visited, TANF caseworkers typically assessed a family's overall requirements (e.g., needs for child care, transportation, and other support services), while staff members in vocational education programs often provided

[3]For specific references to those case study sites associated with the various practices we describe, please see our Index of Promising Practices which follows the text.

specialized vocational and educational assessments in order to match their clients with appropriate services. In combination with the information that TANF agencies collected, such assessments:

- ***Increased the likelihood that participants would succeed in the programs they entered.*** As the director of one program we visited remarked, "It is a travesty to let people go into something they're not prepared for." Where initial assessments suggested that an individual was not likely to succeed in a particular program, they still enabled educators to advise clients about how to address specific academic deficiencies.
- ***Familiarized clients with the requirements of particular occupations.*** Otherwise, some of the individuals we interviewed cautioned, participants might make decisions based on inaccurate or incomplete information about a specific occupation.
- ***Helped students plan their studies and educators plan instruction***. Students who knew in advance where their strengths and weaknesses lay could plan to seek extra assistance at specific points during the program; educators who had detailed information about their students' abilities could tailor instruction appropriately.
- ***Enabled educators and TANF caseworkers to monitor participants' progress*** so that they could identify and address problems quickly.

Linkages with prospective employers and preparation for careers. Prior to PRWORA's enactment in 1996, the role of welfare agency caseworkers was primarily to determine eligibility, assess clients' needs, make referrals to agencies that could provide the necessary services, and maintain contact with the individual. Only a small proportion of clients were involved in education and training activities under the Jobs Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) program, and those individuals could participate for an extended length of time. As a result, welfare agencies did not usually establish linkages with prospective employers, nor did caseworkers require detailed information about local job opportunities. In contrast, the educational institutions that offered vocational education programs kept abreast of local labor market conditions in order to help their graduates find suitable, well-paid employment with career potential, and often designed customized training programs for business and industry. Many of the promising programs we identified took advantage of this experience to design services for TANF clients.

Educators in several of these programs solicited employer input in program development and implementation, tailored curricula to the needs of local businesses, and created instructional programs based on industry standards. These activities facilitated "buy in" from prospective employers, who provided resources such as facilities and equipment as well as internships or

guaranteed placements for program graduates. In return, employers gained access to a "screened" pool of prospective employees (i.e., individuals who were likely to be satisfied with their jobs and to justify their employer's investment in additional training) who had demonstrated their commitment and desire to succeed. Detailed knowledge of local job markets enabled vocational educators to design programs that prepared TANF recipients for careers, rather than jobs with little potential for advancement.

Close working relationships with local employers also enabled vocational education programs to provide postemployment services that TANF caseworkers alone could not manage. Many programs relied on instructors (some of whom were recruited from business and industry) to maintain communication with recent graduates or their employers, in order to identify and address potential problems before they became too serious. Others hired additional staff to monitor graduates' postemployment progress or used job-site mentors to assist them; one established a network of program graduates.

Instruction that combines vocational, life, and academic skills. Another benefit that vocational education programs offered to TANF clients was instruction that combined vocational, life, and academic skills. Vocational educators integrated job-skill training with basic academics, such as math and literacy, and life skills, such as punctuality, communication, grooming, problem solving, and crisis management. Through this multi-faceted approach, vocational educators increased participants' employability by enhancing the effectiveness of their technical training as well as providing important skills that facilitate obtaining and retaining employment. Case study programs also incorporated a variety of instructional strategies which served to increase participant involvement and commitment to education and training. Hands-on learning and team-building activities, for example, promoted self-confidence and networking, facilitating program retention and success.

Access to further education and training. Many of the programs we visited included provisions for participants to further their education after they began work through internship opportunities or sequential courses designed for employed individuals. Articulation or other affiliation with a postsecondary institution provided access to a variety of educational programs (including remedial academics, basic literacy, ESL, adult secondary education, continuing education, and degree programs); this affiliation may have also reduced the stigma of welfare by enabling participants to complete an "educational" (versus a "social service") program. Programs operated by community colleges included both on- and off-campus services to increase access. Familiarizing participants with the college campus and its outposts may have increased the likelihood that participants would return later for additional training.

Summary. Vocational educators brought a variety of resources to the task of providing comprehensive services to persons moving from welfare to work. Benefits to TANF clients included providing occupational and basic academic skills assessment services, developing short-term skills training programs, and working with employers to offer longer term programs in conjunction with employment, therein enabling participants to receive more extensive training while still satisfying TANF work requirements. By integrating basic academics, employability, and life skills into vocational training, programs addressed participants' initial employability as well as their ability to retain employment. Vocational education programs also promoted employer involvement in job preparation through customized and on-the-job training. Working with employers to fill specific areas of hiring need also helped vocational educators ensure that programs led to jobs for which there was a sustained demand in the local labor market, that paid well, and presented career ladders. According to educators, earning a living wage in a job with potential for advancement decreased the likelihood that participants would return to welfare in the future.

Strategies for Maximizing the Role of Vocational Education in Welfare Reform

Case study programs demonstrated a number of strategies for maximizing the role of vocational education in TANF-sponsored employment preparation. To play a key role in such efforts, vocational educators actively pursued opportunities to (1) develop linkages with TANF agencies, (2) participate in intersector partnerships, and (3) attend and respond to the context surrounding workforce development for families on public assistance. We describe these strategies in more detail below. Based on this information, we also provide recommendations for increasing the role of vocational education in welfare reform.[4]

Linkages with TANF. Vocational educators emphasized the importance of initiating and maintaining close relationships with TANF agencies in order to develop services that meet TANF requirements. Rules associated with welfare reform, including time limits on receipt of benefits and specification of work requirements clearly restrict participation in vocational education. Although Perkins-defined vocational education services do not easily fit welfare reform's "work first" philosophy, case study programs tailored their operations to fit the TANF constraints. Some programs, for example, adjusted their hours of operation and duration to meet the need for short-term, intensive training. Programs in states that allowed training and education services to

[4]For specific references to those case study sites associated with the various practices we describe, please see our Index of Promising Practices which follows the text.

substitute for work combined instruction with work activities to meet participation requirements for number of hours of "work" per week. In such instances, ongoing communication with TANF helped educators remain current with changing welfare policies in order to adapt training and education programs to maximize client participation.

Through collaboration with social service agencies, vocational education programs could provide the range of pre- and postemployment services needed to ensure TANF clients' successful participation in vocational education and work. Some programs offered a sequence of courses, including training and education prior to employment, followed with on-the-job training or a return to the classroom after employment to focus on employability and life skills. A menu of courses, respondents said, would help programs address the full range of potential participants, including individuals at risk for entering the welfare rolls, those who were making the transition off public assistance, and those who had made the transition off public assistance and needed to remain off welfare. Such a menu included courses to help prepare potential TANF clients for better-paying jobs and thereby prevent them from going on welfare, to help prepare current TANF clients for work and place them in jobs so that they no longer need welfare, and to help former TANF clients acquire the skills and education necessary for career and salary advancement in order to retain employment and therefore stay off welfare. For individuals receiving cash assistance, courses emphasized job training for employment. Once the client was working, courses emphasized education toward career entry or advancement goals, such as academic skills that would increase an individual's capacity for job change or promotion.

Intersector partnerships. Case study programs collaborated with other agencies and with the private sector to offer an array of services. Comprehensive employment preparation efforts were multidisciplinary and interorganizational, with education, social services, and employers together constituting the 'program' for TANF clients. Education agencies provided assessment and instruction; social services provided case management, job search, and referral resources; employers provided jobs. Other partners, depending upon each client's situation, might include family members in case management and support services; public agencies other than TANF, such as vocational rehabilitation; and community resources. As a result of such partnerships, social services found access to education services for clients, employers found workers, educators gained program participants, and clients received training and education services, as well as employment.

Respondents noted that all partners contributed resources to the collaborative effort. Contributions from multiple agencies allowed programs to blend funds from a variety of sources, and therein to support a diverse range of program components. Education agencies and

institutions covered the costs associated with instruction (teacher salaries, materials), while TANF funds paid for tuition, support services, and cash assistance for individuals and their families. Additional DOL funding helped bring additional participants to the programs, and state and federal grants provided support for replication and additional program features, such as integration with the community. Together, the combination of funds enabled a broader range of program services than either stream could provide by itself. Program staff noted that they did not integrate fiscal resources more fully in part because funding mechanisms were evolving in response to reform efforts. Funding decisions and program fiscal responsibility, for example, were in the midst of shifting from federal to state to local levels, and partnering agencies were in different phases of the shift. Program staff also noted that while there were advantages to drawing funds from several streams, submitting the different types of paperwork required to obtain and maintain funds required a substantial amount of staff time.

Various sectors, including education agencies and institutions, initiated the collaborative partnerships. In several cases providers who had worked under contract to provide Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) training under previous federal legislation contacted the local TANF agency to offer training services. In some cases employers or local TANF agencies requested help with assessment and instruction from the local community college or other postsecondary education institution. Community colleges also took the lead in some cases, hosting programs linked with the local TANF agency for the purposes of recruiting participants and collecting the TANF tuition reimbursement.

Ongoing communication both sustained interagency partnerships and improved the efficiency and effectiveness of service provision. Mechanisms that facilitated communication, such as joint task forces, combined formal opportunities for information sharing with goal setting and problem solving. Groups such as Workforce Investment Boards and advisory boards also allowed representatives from various sectors to meet and exchange information about the resources each sector could provide. Shared electronic information systems facilitated case management by providing multiple agencies with immediate access to client information and establishing a user-friendly format for reporting program evaluation data. Joint assessment and intake procedures and periodic performance reviews enabled the prompt and efficient identification of participants' needs.

Shared facilities enhanced interaction as well. Such settings include one-stop centers and other sites that provided offices for staff from agencies other than the host institution. In some cases, for example, a vocational education instructor taught classes at a social services program; in other cases a caseworker maintained an office in an educational institution or facility. In

programs where providers were not co-located, a staff person might be designated to act as a liaison among education, TANF, and employers. Instructors who worked collaboratively with case managers benefited from the information that social services agency staff shared about their clients' services and goals. Participants we interviewed commented that such information helped instructors to view participants in context and to individualize the program to meet participants' specific needs. Staff could work together to identify the need for support services such as child care and transportation, for example, to help increase participants' access to further education. When all service providers were aware of each others' approach, as well as the client's goals, they could provide a more cohesive program. Providers could reinforce messages across service goals and sectors: caseworkers could reinforce the notion of continuing education; instructors could reinforce punctuality and positive co-worker relationships on the job.

A team approach to service delivery, including the client as a team member, facilitated mutual feedback on progress and joint decision making about goals among clients, staff, and employers. Although the team approach was labor intensive, according to respondents, it increased accountability. Providers who shared information about service intentions were then committed to following through with such services because of the likelihood that they would need to discuss the outcomes of such services with other professionals, as well as with their clients. Some respondents we interviewed also said that working as a team was ultimately a more efficient approach because providers were able to fulfill their own roles without having to perform those of other professionals or otherwise assume responsibility for all the client's needs.

The context surrounding welfare reform and workforce development. The leaders of promising programs had designed services that were aligned with the contexts surrounding welfare reform and workforce development. Programs were aligned with the goals of community economic development initiatives, the needs of local employers, and the mandates of TANF. Leaders were also actively involved in political and other processes that shaped the environment within which they worked.

Respondents predicted that impending changes in the welfare caseload would result in a higher demand for vocational and other education services. They noted, for example, that as members of the TANF population become increasingly "harder-to-serve" (i.e., composed primarily of clients who cannot find employment through initial services such as assisted job search), they would require a more comprehensive and complex system of services that addressed basic skills education, instruction in employability or "soft" skills, and English as a Second Language (ESL). Respondents also reported that a decrease in the welfare rolls could lead TANF agencies to turn their attention and resources toward job retention and diversion

programs and, thus, increase support for education. Our case study programs had, in fact, already begun to adjust their menu of options to accommodate these foreseen changes in the policy environment.

Recommendations for Increasing the Role of Vocational Education in Welfare Reform

We recommend that vocational educators consider the actions that staff from these programs took to increase TANF clients' access to education services. Key staff were proactive about establishing relationships with TANF agencies, or quick to respond when others initiated a partnership. They were active members of interagency groups and participated in other mechanisms for communicating about the relationship among education, public assistance, and workforce development needs and services. They were also forward in their thinking about evolving service needs, rather than entrenched in a set of procedures for service delivery. Based on these observations, we recommend that vocational educators consider the following steps toward increasing their role in welfare reform. Recommendations address linkages with TANF, intersector partnerships, and attention to the context surrounding welfare reform and workforce development.

1. **Establish and maintain close linkages with TANF.**

- Initiate and maintain productive relationships with local TANF agencies.
- Seek assistance from TANF staff to understand and stay abreast of TANF requirements.
- Adapt education programs to meet TANF restrictions so that more clients will be able to participate.
- Work with TANF agencies to identify all clients with educational needs, including individuals who are at risk for entry or re-entry into the welfare system.
- Work with TANF agencies to fund services for a broader population with funding other than TANF, as well as additional monies that may become available for prevention or retention.
- Offer a sequence of courses that provides training and education both pre- and postemployment.

2. Participate in intersector partnerships.

- Identify, join, or create interagency groups, advisory boards, service provider teams or other mechanisms for communicating across sectors involved in welfare reform and workforce development.
- Communicate with other organizations to increase their awareness of vocational education assessment and instructional services.
- Offer assessment services to identify needs and courses to meet the specific needs of TANF clients. Work with TANF caseworkers to inform clients of training and education options, so that clients can enter programs that match their interests and skills.
- Work with employers to identify their hiring and training needs.
- Help partners identify funding and other resources to support employment preparation. Determine what each sector can contribute in terms of services, support, and in-kind resources. Be willing to contribute education resources.
- Share information on a regular basis with other providers with whom educators have a common caseload. Involve other providers in decision making about participants' education plans.

3. Attend and respond to the context surrounding welfare reform and workforce development.

- Identify and become involved in local economic development initiatives. Communicate with leaders about the role, or potential role, for vocational education in those initiatives.
- Track and consider the impact of political trends and policy changes that influence welfare reform and workforce development. Anticipate changes in the profile of potential vocational education participants, including individuals receiving public assistance.
- Work with other public agencies and with employers to predict the changing demand for vocational education. Respond to such changes including, for example, the service needs of harder-to-serve clients, through programs of instruction that combine vocational, life, and academic skills and offer access to further education and training.

Chapter 3
Program Context

Key Findings:

Local program developers tailored programs to fit with federal and state TANF requirements.

States made a variety of decisions that helped determine how long, and under what conditions, TANF clients could participate in vocational education and training.

Reductions in caseloads could make states more willing to allow clients to participate in educational programs. These reductions also meant that many states were shifting their emphasis to job retention and postemployment services, as well as diversion programs.

Program developers designed programs to fit with the local economy and employment context.

In addressing the research questions for this task order, we found that program developers shaped programs not only to meet the needs of the population to be served, but also to fit with the policy and economic context in which the local program operated. The 12 selected programs (some of which had been in existence for a number of years) complied with the requirements for several newly enacted pieces of federal legislation,[1] and also with their state's approach to implementing these statutes. To ensure that services met federal and state requirements, program leaders interacted with local welfare and workforce development agency staff. Across case study sites, we observed variation in the degree of local flexibility for operationalizing state welfare reform and workforce development policies, as well as diversity in local job markets and economic conditions. Our study therefore yielded a number of program approaches for providing vocational education and other services to TANF clients, given the influence of federal, state, and local context on expectations for those programs.

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[1]PRWORA, the 1997 Balanced Budget Act (BBA), and the 1998 Workforce Investment Act (WIA).

The Federal Context

PRWORA required states to comply with its regulations in order to receive TANF block grants. Regulations that dictated the number of families to serve and the number of hours clients must participate in work activities directly influenced service delivery for case study programs. Grants from the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) also had an impact on programs that sought additional funds for involving "harder-to-serve" clients. Finally, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) had recently passed at the time of this study; case study respondents expressed uncertainty about how changes associated with WIA would affect their programs.

At the time of our site visits (April through June of 1999), PRWORA requirements called for states to involve 35 percent of all families, and 90 percent of two-parent families, in work activities for 25 hours a week.[2] At least 20 hours of the work requirement were to be fulfilled through activities directly related to work; job search could count as work for only six weeks. Administrators at one site — noting that the federal work requirement would increase to 30 hours on July 1, 1999 — speculated about lengthening programs to accommodate client requirements or adopting an apprenticeship model that would build in work hours. Some participants said that because TANF clients were most likely to be successful in intensive, shorter-term programs, increasing work requirements could lead to declines in program participation and completion. Others planned to adapt their program designs to fit with participants' work schedules. (***Chapter 2*** describes PRWORA in more detail.)

While the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has responsibility for PRWORA's implementation, the U.S. Department of Labor is also involved in welfare reform through its welfare-to-work programs, supported by the 1997 BBA. This program, administered by DOL and its state-level counterparts, is intended to help states and local communities serve TANF recipients who have multiple barriers to employment. It supports both formula grants to states (which flow through local Private Industry Councils [PICs] or Workforce Investment Boards [WIBs]) and competitive grants to local communities. DOL funds pay for activities such as job creation through short-term public or private sector wage subsides, on-the-job training, contracts with public or private providers of job readiness, job placement, and postemployment services, community service or work experience, or job retention and supportive services. At least 70 percent of funding, however, must be used to serve individuals who:

- ***Are long-term welfare recipients or within 12 months of termination from TANF,*** and who face two of three "labor market deficiencies," including lack of a high

[2]These "target" work participation rates are adjusted according to the percentage by which the state has reduced its caseload since Fiscal Year 1995.

school diploma or GED, requiring substance abuse treatment for employment, and poor work history; or

- ***Are noncustodial parents of minors*** whose custodial parents meet these criteria (U.S. Department of Labor, n.d.).[3]

Several of the case study programs received DOL funding, including CET, REN, Steps to Success, and the Workforce Development Programs in El Paso.

The programs we visited were also affected to varying degrees by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, whose provisions include requirements for:

- ***A variety of agencies to offer "core services" through one-stop career centers.***[4] These agencies include those that provide unemployment compensation, adult education and literacy, vocational rehabilitation, postsecondary vocational education, welfare-to-work services, and other employment and training programs.
- ***Local officials to create Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs)*** — comprising representatives of businesses, labor organizations, educational entities, community-based organizations, and economic development agencies — to oversee operation of the career centers.
- ***Creation of individual training accounts*** for eligible individuals. (Clients are eligible for training services only if they are unable to obtain or retain employment through core and intensive services.)
- ***Local WIBs to certify providers that are eligible to receive training funds,*** through either individual accounts or contracts, in accordance with procedures developed by the state's governor.
- ***States to monitor performance*** of the one-stops on WIA's "core indicators," which include entry into, and retention in, unsubsidized employment; earnings; and attainment of credentials documenting achievement of educational or occupational skills, as well as other state- and locally defined measures. (WIA, Sections 134, 117, 122, and 136).

States have until July 1, 2000, to begin implementing the five-year strategic plans that they are required to develop under the Act. As of August 1, 1999, only 17 had submitted their

[3]Up to 30 percent of funds may be spent for services to individuals who are "recent" recipients of TANF assistance or noncustodial parents who have characteristics associated with long-term welfare dependence, such as school dropout, teen pregnancy, or poor work history.

[4]Core services include eligibility determination; outreach, intake, and orientation; initial assessment; job search, placement assistance, and career counseling; and provision of information on employment opportunities, program performance, and unemployment compensation. The one-stops also provide *intensive* and *training* services; the latter category includes occupational skills training, on-the-job training, cooperative education, job readiness training, adult education and literacy services in combination with other activities, and customized training (WIA, Section. 134(b)(2)-(4)).

plans, and only two of the states we visited (Florida and Texas) had received DOL approval (National Governors' Association, 1999).

The State Context

Within the context of the federal legislation, states shaped transition to work by deciding how long, and under what conditions, TANF clients could participate in education and training to transition off welfare. State decisions also included eligibility requirements and benefit levels. In sum, the states could:

- ***Specify that individuals would receive benefits from federal funds*** for less than the 60 months specified in PRWORA, or provide benefits from their own funds after 60 months;
- ***Require clients to engage in work*** in a shorter time period than that established by PRWORA;[5] or
- ***Provide Transitional Medicaid and Child Care*** to families that lost TANF benefits for more than 12 months (Administration for Children and Families, 1999).

Exhibit 3 illustrates the variation states demonstrated in their decision making about TANF policies, across case study sites. In some cases, states afforded TANF clients even more flexibility than PRWORA itself allowed under the terms of waivers granted by the federal government prior to 1996. More than 40 states obtained waivers before PRWORA was enacted, and those that chose to do so (including at least two of the states represented by our selected programs) could continue to operate under waiver terms until their expiration date.

Another way in which states influenced the design and implementation of programs was through their definitions of "work activities."[6] Unless operating under a waiver, states can count individuals toward work participation rates only if they are involved in one of the activities outlined in PRWORA.[7] However, the federal statute does not provide specific definitions for those activities and, as described in the case study reports in Volume 2, some states chose to define them more broadly than others.

[5]The federal legislation calls for TANF recipients to engage in work within 24 months.

[6]The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families plans to collect information on state definitions of "work activities." This information, however, will not be available until late 2000.

[7]They are not prohibited, however, from supporting additional activities.

Exhibit 3. Selected State TANF Policies

State	Time Limits	Time Frame for Work	Transitional Medicaid Assistance (TMA) and Child Care
Florida	24 out of 60 months; lifetime limit of 48 months	Immediately	TMA for 12 months; child care for 24 months
Georgia	48 months	Immediately	TMA and child care for 12 months
Illinois	No limit if family has earned income and works 20 hours a week; 24 months for families with child under age 13 and no earnings; 60 months for all other families	When ready or within 24 months	TMA for 12 months; unlimited child care for low-income families; copayment for all within earned income
Maine*	60 months	When ready or within 24 months	TMA for 12 months; child care until youngest child reaches age 13 or family becomes ineligible
Michigan	Will use state funds after 60 months	Within 60 days	TMA for 12 months; child care based on income
Missouri*	60 months; under waiver, will deny benefits if family reapplies after completing an Individual Responsibility Plan and had received benefits for 36 months	When ready or within 24 months	TMA for 12 months with 24-month extension; no limit on child care for low-income families
New York	60 months	When ready or within 24 months	TMA and child care for 12 months
North Carolina**	24 months	When ready or within 24 months	TMA and child care for 12 months
Ohio	36 months	When ready or within 24 months	TMA and child care for 12 months
Oregon	24 months, not including months in which the individual participates in JOBS	Immediately	TMA for 12 months; unlimited child care for low-income families
Texas	12, 24, or 36 months lifetime for adults, depending on employability of head of household	Immediately	TMA and child care for 12 months

* Operating under waiver at the time of our site visits.

** Two of the selected programs were located in North Carolina.

SOURCE: Site visit reports and Administration for Children and Families (1999a).

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Respondents noted that reductions in caseloads might make states more willing to allow clients to participate in educational programs. These reductions meant that states could shift their emphasis to job retention, postemployment services, and diversion programs to prevent individuals from entering or re-entering the welfare system. Illinois, for example, recently began allowing some clients to pursue postsecondary programs to gain skills and knowledge for higher-paying, more stable employment. Both state and local administrators in Michigan also observed that their state was increasingly willing to support participation in education activities as a strategy for moving TANF clients into the workforce.

Drastic reductions in caseloads (see ***Exhibit 4***) also increase the need for programs for individuals who are increasingly harder to serve. Left on the welfare rolls, respondents told us, are clients who present multiple barriers to employment (low basic skills, alcohol or substance abuse, health problems, learning disabilities, criminal histories, and domestic violence) and are likely to require more extensive services in order to obtain and retain employment. Administrators we interviewed noted that although clients demonstrated greater need, they often did not meet the strict criteria for participation in DOL welfare-to-work programs.

The Local Context

The degree of autonomy that states granted to local welfare agencies also influenced program development. Under PRWORA, states can delegate responsibility to counties either by establishing basic guidelines and then allowing counties to make choices within those parameters, or by allowing counties to develop and implement their own program rules (policies concerning eligibility, benefits, work requirements, time limits, etc.) (Gallagher et al., 1998). Local welfare agencies in some of the states we visited were highly autonomous, according to respondents. This flexibility allowed the TANF agencies to make changes in response to local conditions, including the design of the employment and training programs that served their clients. Beyond familiarizing themselves with welfare reform, local vocational educators had to fully understand the requirements of their welfare agencies in order to offer services for TANF clients. Administrators in programs serving clients from across county lines often had to develop a working knowledge of more than one set of regulations.

The local employment context also helped shape efforts to move TANF clients into jobs. Programs operating in strong local economies had more access to well-paid employment for participants. At ATP, for example, respondents reported that local employers were "begging" for workers, and that jobs at fast food restaurants often paid $7 to $9 an hour. The demand for

Exhibit 4. TANF Recipients and Caseload Reductions by State

	January 1993	March 1999	Percent Change
Florida	701,482	198,101	-72%
Georgia	402,228	137,976	-66%
Illinois	685,508	382,937	-44%
Maine	67,836	34,108	-50%
Michigan	686,356	263,583	-62%
Missouri	259,039	135,383	-48%
New York	1,179,522	828,302	-30%
North Carolina*	331,633	138,570	-58%
Ohio	720,476	282,444	-61%
Oregon	117,656	45,450	-61%
Texas	785,271	313,823	-60%
National	**14,114,992**	**7,334,976**	**-48%**

* Two of the selected programs were located in North Carolina.

SOURCE: Administration for Children and Families (1999b).

construction workers was especially strong in the local context surrounding SLW due to several major projects, including expansion of the city's airport and replacement of existing public housing (supported by a $47 million grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development). Staff at CET, in contrast, reported difficulty recruiting participants because of a very low unemployment rate in the surrounding community.

Developers of most of the programs we visited had considered local labor market conditions in their program designs. Attention to the labor market context helped developers target occupations, businesses, and industries in which there was a sustained demand for new workers. As a result, according to respondents, graduates of such programs may be reasonably secure in their jobs even if an economic downturn threatens job security for the newly employed. Designers of Florida's Short-Term Job Training Programs, for example, worked with their local Workforce Development Board to target occupations that both presented job opportunities in the local labor market and held potential for advancement. Similarly, CET bases its programs' feasibility on local labor market analyses. HOST responded to a shortage of hospitality workers so critical that employers were trying to attract employees from countries outside the U.S. Some

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programs offered occupational skill development that was in demand not only locally, but also in other areas: one union official with whom we interviewed in Missouri observed that a construction worker could travel throughout the country if he chose to do so and that the absence of seniority rules in most trades meant that new workers would not necessarily be the first laid off in an economic downturn.

Linkages with local economic development efforts also assisted program development and implementation. Two of the programs we visited were involved with local initiatives supported by "Enterprise Community" grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. In St. Louis, the St. Louis Works Partnership expected to relocate to a planned "Technology Park," on a "Brownfields" site,[8] where several agencies will share recruiting and assessment services. Administrators from the El Paso Community College (host institution for the Workforce Development Programs) had helped apply for an Enterprise Community grant in order to receive support as a neighborhood Activity and Employment Center.

[8]The Environmental Protection Agency provides funding to clean up "brownfields," which are contaminated industrial sites.

Chapter 4
Organizational Structure

Key Findings:

While each type of host organization had unique strengths, no single entity could provide the complete array of services necessary to help TANF clients with varying needs obtain and retain employment.

As a result, the selected programs adopted a variety of strategies to develop collaborative relationships with other service providers, as well as other organizations that had a stake in the success of welfare reform efforts.

These strategies included: (1) involving employers in program development and implementation; (2) developing linkages with postsecondary programs; and (3) creating and maintaining intersector partnerships through mechanisms such as local Workforce Investment Boards and advisory groups.

A variety of organizations — welfare agencies, community colleges, nonprofit organizations, a labor union, and an employers' professional organization — served as host institutions for the 12 case study programs. Each type of host institution brought certain strengths to the program: the employer organization could facilitate access to paid training opportunities, for example, while community colleges offered an array of support services and exposed participants to opportunities for further education. ***Exhibit 5*** delineates the agencies associated with each case study program (please see ***Appendix C*** for a more detailed matrix outlining the responsibilities of these various partners).

None of the host institutions among programs we visited attempted to provide the complete array of services necessary to help TANF's diverse clientele obtain and retain employment. Instead, they had adopted a variety of strategies for collaborating with stakeholders in welfare reform and other organizations that provided necessary services. Such organizations included, for example, employers, secondary and postsecondary educational institutions, economic development agencies, and local governments. These strategies included:

- Involving employers in program development and implementation;
- Developing linkages with postsecondary institutions; and
- Intersector partnerships created and maintained by mechanisms such as local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) and advisory groups.

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Exhibit 5. Host Institutions and Collaborating Agencies

Program	Host Institution (Type and Role)	Collaborating Agencies
Advanced Technology Program	Community college Program management, assessment, curriculum development, customized training, case management, counseling, support services	TANF agency, Workforce Development Boards, transit authority, Child Care Coordinating committee, JOBS Commission, transitional housing provider, employers
Center for Employment Training	National nonprofit Assessment, counseling, employment preparation, referrals, placement, follow-up, labor market information, education and training services, policy and procedures manual for local staff, financial support	TANF agency, Workforce Development Boards, Chambers of Commerce, temporary job placement agencies, technical colleges, universities, employers
Columbus County JobLink Career Center	Community college operating a one-stop career center Assessment, counseling, employment preparation, referrals, placement, follow-up, labor market information, education and training services	One-stop partner agencies, employers
Hospitality On-Site Training	Hospitality professional organization and local vocational education agency Job placement, training, and support	Local TANF agency, employers
NEW Choices	Goodwill Industries (community-based organization) Recruitment, assessment, case management, education and training services, support services through other community organizations	TANF agency, Trade association, employers
Parents as Scholars	State TANF agency Eligibility determination, payment of benefits, case management, referrals	Technical colleges and universities
Regional Employment Network	ACCESS Center* Coordination, development of shared information system, case management, assessment, referrals, education and training services, support services	TANF agency, 12 employment and training agencies, employers
Short-Term Job Training Programs	Community college Education and training services	TANF agency, Workforce Development Board, service providers, Jobs and Benefits Offices, employers
St. Louis Works	Labor union Recruitment, assessment, orientation, tutoring	Labor unions, employers, banks, local government, community-based organizations, employers
Steps to Success	Community college Education and training services, job placement	TANF agency, Workforce Development Board, one-stop partners, employers
Teen Parent Services	State TANF agency Statewide administration, case management, counseling, referrals	Local social service and community service agencies (under contract), community colleges, employers
Workforce Development Programs	Community college Assessment, education and training services	TANF agency, Workforce Development Board, employers

*New York's ACCESS Centers were established by the state's Departments of Education, Labor, and Social Services to provide comprehensive services to adults.

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Involving Employers

The case study programs recognized the importance of ensuring that there was a market for their services among both TANF clients and potential employers. To make sure that their services and their graduates were "marketable," programs involved employers through a number of activities, including:

- ***Selection of program participants.*** Programs that offered services concurrently with employment relied on business and industry representatives to assist with interviewing and selecting participants. This joint process helped to ensure the success of applicants both within the program and on the job.
- ***Curriculum development.*** Soliciting employer input regarding development and implementation allowed programs to base curricula on industry standards and tailor training to the needs of local employers, while simultaneously facilitating "buy in."
- ***Provision of ongoing feedback.*** Staff used formal and informal meetings and surveys to obtain feedback from employers; this feedback addressed the performance of individual participants and the program in general.
- ***Job placement.*** Employers provided internship and apprenticeship opportunities, as well as work experience placements.
- ***Designation of work-site mentors***. Business and industry representatives served as mentors for participants in some programs.
- ***Participation in special events.*** Employers served as guest speakers and attended other activities that allowed both formal and informal interaction with program participants.
- ***Access to resources.*** In a few cases, employers provided program staff with access to costly resources such as facilities and equipment.

Strong partnerships with employers benefited education programs in several ways. Michigan's Advanced Technology Program, for example, worked with two companies (Electronic Data Systems and Kelly Services) that offered high-paying jobs with the potential for advancement, and provided students with the opportunity to choose from a variety of job assignments, mentoring, in-house training, and support from company staff members who were assigned to assist them with any problems they encountered and provide feedback on their performance. Employers involved with the HOST program similarly made career options available to former TANF clients and provided support for postemployment education.

These relationships benefited the employers themselves, as well. In exchange for their support, the case study programs offered employers resumes and referrals, interview assistance, customized and other on-the-job training, and postemployment support services, such as employability coaching. Not only did case study programs save employers the trouble and

expense of recruiting job applicants, they also helped to screen the pool of potential employees. Because program completers were familiar with the type of work that they would be doing, they were more likely to remain on the job than other new workers, according to respondents. As a result, employers avoided investing money in training people who might not remain with their companies. This arrangement could be particularly helpful in industries such as construction, where high wages may attract individuals who do not understand the physically demanding and sometimes seasonal nature of the work.

Linkages with Postsecondary Programs

Administrators also established collaborative relationships with postsecondary programs in order to take advantage of the resources that they offered and to ensure that participants had access to further education after they began work. To increase such access, the case study programs established linkages with community colleges and other postsecondary institutions through:

- ***Formal articulation agreements,*** such as in the St. Louis Works program where the director of St. Louis' Construction Trades School reported that several community colleges in his area had agreed to award apprentices credit toward an associate degree. By making the possibility of advancement "visible," such agreements can promote retention among all participants.
- ***Sequences of courses*** that could lead to a two-year degree. In North Carolina, the Columbus County Joblink Career Center offered open entry/open exit vocational course sequences that led to associate degrees. In Florida, Short-Term Training at Daytona Beach Community College offered a similar open entry/open exit series of occupational completion points.
- ***"Bridge" programs*** designed to improve the access of disadvantaged youth to postsecondary education. In Illinois, the community colleges' Bridge program helped teen parents make the transition from GED to postsecondary programs. In New York, a similar program was co-located with the host agency.

Intersector Partnerships

As noted earlier in this report, several of the selected programs existed prior to the passage of PRWORA in 1996. These programs could depend upon the collaborative relationships that they had developed to serve participants in JTPA and other programs that existed at that time. Agencies located in states that had established local Workforce Investment Boards (including Michigan, North Carolina, Florida, and Texas) or one-stop centers could also rely partially on relationships created by these efforts. WIBs, for example, may include

businesses, secondary and postsecondary educational institutions, labor organizations, community-based organizations, and economic development agencies, as well as programs funded by the following sources:

- Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities;
- Employment Service;
- Adult Education;
- Postsecondary vocational education;
- Vocational rehabilitation;
- Welfare-to-work;
- Title V of the Older Americans Act;
- Trade Adjustment Assistance;
- NAFTA Transitional Adjustment Assistance;
- Veterans Employment and Training Programs; and
- Community Services Block Grants.

Other programs (including those authorized by TANF) may participate at state and local discretion.

At the time of our site visits (April to June 1999), the states were at a relatively early stage of WIA implementation. The individuals we interviewed, however, suggested that the Boards and one-stops had helped the partner agencies to begin thinking of "collaboration" as the development of networking relationships, rather than linkages among individual organizations. In North Carolina, for example, an administrator at the community college that housed the Columbus County Joblink Career Center reported that, while the agencies involved had always had good relationships, they had improved them even further since the one-stop center was established (e.g., by coordinating their assessment processes, and by working together to fill job openings). The partnership enabled participating agencies to refer their customers to services that the center itself did not provide; in other words, "collaboration leads to resources."

Respondents reported that mutual benefit was a key element in collaborative partnerships. The 12 agencies that formed the Regional Employment Network in New York found that interagency relationships enabled them to stop competing against each other, to specialize in providing the services they were best at, and to offer businesses a larger pool of potential employees. In North Carolina, agencies participating in the one-stop center benefited ". . .from the shared commitment to making things better," and from shared funding that enabled them to tackle "major issues." Interagency relationships also allowed collaborators to conserve

resources. Missouri's St. Louis Works, while recognizing the need for additional support services, was trying to identify existing sources for those services rather than providing all of them itself. Staff from JobLink, REN, and TPS reported that joint assessment and intake procedures and periodic performance reviews enabled the prompt and efficient identification of participants' needs.

Case study programs also employed a variety of advisory groups — including task forces, boards of directors, steering committees, and "leadership teams" — to promote ongoing communication and to help eliminate "turf" issues among collaborating service providers. The programs recognized that "customers" for their services included not only TANF clients, but also employers, local governments, community-based organizations, entities concerned with economic development, and the community as a whole. As a result, advisory group membership tended to include, as one respondent put it, "all who face the impact of failure (of welfare reform efforts) in one way or another." For example:

- ***Advanced Technology Program*** established a task force that included representatives of the area's workforce development boards, the state's Child Care Coordinating Committee, JOBS Commission,[1] transitional housing provider, and employers;
- ***HOST's*** advisory group involved representatives of state and local welfare agencies, educational institutions, and the hospitality industry;
- ***JobLink*** is a collaborative effort of the Employment Security Commission Department of Social Services Division of Vocational Rehabilitation JTPA programs and the community college; JobLink's steering committee includes these partners as well as dozens of other city and state agencies and organizations; and
- ***St. Louis Works*** was governed by a Board of Directors that included not only representatives of unions and employers, but also banks that finance construction projects, economic development entities responsible for attracting new businesses, city and county officials, and community-based organizations.

[1]Michigan's JOBS Commission included the Departments of Commerce, Labor, and Economic Development, as well as other agencies involved in workforce development.

Chapter 5
Program Participants and Services

Key Findings:

Some programs served not only TANF clients but also others who needed employment preparation services.

Careful assessment and orientation were strategies for selecting participants who were likely to succeed.

While respondents agreed that participants needed a comprehensive array of services, most programs did not attempt to provide the full range of options themselves.

Effective service coordination required close contact between TANF caseworkers and instructors.

Respondents described the need for service options and an individualized approach to effect successful participant outcomes.

This chapter describes both the participants that programs served and the services that the programs provided. First, we discuss participant characteristics, as well as the activities programs undertook to recruit, select, and plan services for those participants. Second, we outline the services participants received from the case study sites, and from other organizations, to help them make the transition from public assistance to successful employment.

Program Participants

Here we describe the characteristics of the populations case study programs served and actions programs undertook to bring participants to their programs, including both recruitment and selection. We also include information about how staff planned services to meet participant needs.

Participant Characteristics

We found that programs served a range of participants, including individuals receiving TANF benefits, specific subgroups of the TANF population, and non-TANF clients. While all of the programs we studied accepted individuals receiving public assistance, some designed or tailored their services to meet the employment preparation needs of certain groups. Others only

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accepted into their programs individuals with qualifications associated with the services the program provided. Targeted subgroups included, for example:

- Individuals who scored at a specific grade level on a test of academic skills,
- Those who met the requirements for enrolling in a postsecondary degree program,
- Residents of a specific rural area,
- Residents of a specific urban area,
- Women with employment barriers,
- Teen parents, and
- Spanish-speaking adults.

In addition to employment preparation services for individuals receiving TANF benefits, we found that programs offered services for other individuals who also needed skills for employment or wished to improve their employment status. Non-TANF participants included, for example:

- Economically disadvantaged adults in general,
- Underemployed and underskilled workers,
- Dislocated workers in general, and
- Dislocated workers receiving Transitional Adjustment Assistance (TAA) under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

Exhibit 6 lists each case study program and describes its target population in more detail.

In describing the characteristics of the populations they served, case study respondents said that TANF clients were often women, single parents, and lacking a GED or high school diploma. In general, therefore, program participants typically needed to learn new skills to increase their earning power and benefited from access to GED preparation. Child care was also an essential ingredient in their transition to employment. Specific subgroups exhibited characteristics that defined their membership in that group: NAFTA-sponsored participants enrolled in workforce development courses at El Paso Community College (EPCC), for example, were predominately older Hispanic women who lacked education and English skills, while the Teen Parent Services (TPS) program in Illinois targeted young mothers receiving welfare

Exhibit 6. Target Population

PROGRAM	TARGET POPULATION
Advanced Technology Program	TANF clients who score at or above the 10th grade level on the TABE reading component
Center for Employment Training	Low-income individuals (including underemployed and underskilled workers) over age 16 who lack a high school diploma or GED
Columbus County Joblink Career Center	County residents seeking employment or advancement; 10 to 25 percent of participants are welfare clients, some are dislocated workers
Hospitality On-Site Training	TANF clients; many participants do not have a high school diploma
NEW Choices	Low-income women with employment barriers who are interested in the construction and building trades industry; approximately 50 percent of participants are TANF clients
Parents as Scholars	TANF-eligible individuals who meet the entrance requirements of postsecondary institutions
Regional Employment Network	TANF clients who did not find employment through job clubs, or expressed interest in vocational training as well as other adults
Short-Term Job Training Programs	TANF clients and other economically disadvantaged adults (including dislocated workers) who earn required scores on TABE reading, math, and language tests (fourth- to tenth-grade-level, depending on the program of interest)
St. Louis Works	Minorities, women, and other residents of the St. Louis area
Steps to Success	TANF clients and dislocated workers (GED required for advanced programs)
Teen Parent Services	TANF clients under age 20 who have dependent children
Workforce Development Programs	TANF clients and individuals eligible for Transitional Adjustment Assistance (TAA) under the North American Free Trade Agreement; participants are primarily Hispanic women with less than a sixth-grade education and limited proficiency in English (English proficiency is, however, a prerequisite for the Adult Basic Care component

benefits who were under 20 years of age and pregnant or with at least one child. Such groups required additional, or somewhat different, services. Programs for NAFTA clients might emphasize basic education and English skills. Services for teen parents focused on secondary education and career awareness, as well as health services (such as prenatal care) and parenting skills.

Respondents commented that the face of the "typical" TANF client may be changing. Over the past year or two TANF clients had begun to exhibit characteristics of those "harder to serve," with increasing, and increasingly complex, barriers to self-sufficiency. Such barriers included substance abuse, domestic violence, criminal history, and learning disability issues, all of which would require a wider array of services. Respondents also reported that very few

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participants qualified for special DOL funding because they did not demonstrate the specific combination of barriers that DOL required at the time of the study, such as limited skills and limited work history.

Participant Recruitment

Case study program staff worked with TANF agencies and other service organizations to attract participants to their programs. TANF caseworkers were often the primary agents for referring clients for participation in training and education programs. Program staff emphasized the importance of working with the local TANF agency to increase referrals for education services because in some cases TANF rules did not permit programs to recruit directly; in others, local and state work-first policies pushed individuals receiving TANF benefits, as well as individuals applying for TANF benefits, into job search. In Oregon, for example, TANF applicants participate in a 45-day assessment period, during which caseworkers identify the family's needs and attempt to address those needs with quick interventions, such as one-time cash assistance. A client who finds work and avoids entering the welfare rolls through these activities would not obtain a referral for training and education services.

Respondents said that close working relationships between caseworkers and program staff help ensure that TANF clients, as well as those at risk for entering the welfare rolls, have access to their education services. Caseworkers needed to be familiar with vocational education programs in order to present them as options to potential participants in their caseload. Program staff increased awareness of education options by working directly with TANF caseworkers to help them recognize clients with potential for success in a particular vocational field. They also developed and distributed informational brochures and gave presentations targeting the TANF agency and other service organizations, as well as potential participants. Whenever possible, respondents said, they arranged for program graduates to speak at orientation sessions. "Our best recruitment tool is former students," according to one program director.

Another strategy for ensuring adequate enrollment was to design programs that emphasized desirable vocations. Programs that prepared participants to work in high-paying occupational fields with hiring potential were able to attract a high number of applicants. Staff noted, however, that high-paying occupational fields such as construction may not be suited for all applicants and, as an Advanced Technology Program (ATP) staff member recommended, developers should "be sure there is a market among both employers and clients" before launching into program development. Although construction and machine tool technology programs attracted applicants, many of those participating in work preparation services (predominantly women, given TANF demographics) did not complete the courses. According to St. Louis Works (SLW) staff, their apprenticeship program for the building trades industry

experienced "tremendous attrition between testing and work." Respondents noted that offering choices within or across vocations increased the likelihood that participants would enroll and complete the programs. In addition, they said, completion rates improved when programs screened participants by setting entry requirements and through assessment and orientation activities. We discuss strategies for screening participants in the following section.

Participant Selection

Several methods of entry were associated with most programs, which served to allow or encourage potential participants to enroll, or precluded or discouraged them from enrolling. TANF clients typically required a referral from their caseworker for training and education services prior to program entry. Caseworkers might base their referral decision on data from an assessment tool, a perception of the client's aptitude or needs, information gathered through an interview with the client, or from career exploration activities that were part of job search for TANF clients.

Programs that targeted a specific population set requirements for program entry. Such requirements might include, for example, scoring at a specific grade level on a test of academic skills or meeting the requirements for enrolling in a postsecondary degree program. Certain short-term training programs required minimum scores on basic skills and language proficiency tests, while others required that participants hold a high school diploma or GED. Staff in these programs explained that without basic education and English language skills individuals could not participate effectively in vocational education. Staff referred such applicants to other courses, programs, or agencies for assistance with basic skills, language skills development, and GED preparation.

Orientation at the program level could also serve to screen out applicants who were unlikely to succeed in specific training and education services. Some programs provided information to help clients decide whether or not the services fit their interests and needs. Applicants to NEW Choices, a program that prepared women for work in construction, completed a self-assessment tool prior to program entry to determine whether construction work would "fit" with personal and financial goals. The Advanced Technology Program conducted a group orientation to inform potential participants of the application process, required testing, and the time commitment the program demanded. Applicants could then decide whether or not they should continue, given program expectations. It is "unfair to allow people to enter a program in which they are unlikely to succeed," staff explained. "We need people to be able to benefit from what we have to offer."

The hiring process screened applicants for HOST. Potential participants applied for work with hospitality employers, such as hotels and restaurants, in order to enter the program. By hiring applicants, employers, rather than program staff, selected participants. Employers interviewed TANF clients during job fairs that program staff conducted several times per year. Only those clients who employers hired were eligible to begin the training and education program.

Screening was both a service and a disservice to program applicants, respondents noted. While careful participant selection improved the program's completion rate, the practice amounted to "creaming," according to some, and in essence discriminated against individuals with limited education and experience. Others were strongly in favor of screening, such as the Short-Term Training director at Daytona Beach Community College who said, "it is a travesty to let people go into something they're not prepared for." ATP staff noted that assessment as a screening tool was especially important for programs that prepare participants for high-wage jobs. Such programs attract a large pool of applicants, they explained, including too many who are unlikely to succeed.

Planning Services for Participants

TANF clients generally worked with their caseworkers prior to program entry to develop an employment and education plan. Once enrolled in education services, program staff worked with participants to refine these plans. Further testing informed decision making about the services the participant would receive. Assessment data also allowed programs to track and report participant progress.

"Thorough intake" procedures for TANF included assessment and orientation to generate useful information for program planning prior to program entry. TANF requires clients to develop employment and education plans that spell out the services participants will receive, the client's responsibility for participation, and the support the TANF agency will provide, such as tuition and reimbursement for transportation and child care costs. Some caseworkers administered skill and interest inventories to help participants determine a focus for their education services and develop a plan.

Once a client was referred for education services, the assessment process should continue, respondents noted, for the purpose of refining the client's education plan and goals. In-depth evaluation of participants' vocational and academic skills was key to setting appropriate goals for successful employment. Assessment was especially likely to continue in programs that offered a variety of courses (such as community colleges with classes in office work, manufacturing, adult care, etc.) or preparation for various positions in a certain industry (such as

for front desk clerk, PBX operator, or cook in the hospitality field). Some programs administered an assessment based on Work Keys task analysis to identify areas of strength and need for tailoring education and support services for individual participants. Vocational educators for the HOST program evaluated applicants' skills and knowledge and shared those data with employers. Some employers we interviewed said that assessment data helped them decide whether to hire and where to place program applicants.

Early efforts to help participants identify a focus and set goals also helped program staff "establish trust" with individuals. Staff who worked with teen parents, for example, said that positive, respectful interactions early in the staff-client relationship were critical to success. According to respondents from the Teen Parent Services program in Illinois, young mothers increased their commitment to education goals when they understood how services would benefit their child. "You have to make it about her baby," as one caseworker explained. Other respondents concurred with the importance of motivation, particularly for those participants who had experienced little employment or education success. The TANF time limits on welfare benefits placed pressure on participants, motivating some and inhibiting others' ability to perform well. Ongoing feedback about their progress helped participants maintain their focus.

Respondents noted the importance of evaluation to establish a baseline measure of participants' vocational and academic skills. With employment preparation and education goals based on assessment results, program staff could re-evaluate strengths and needs to check progress. Progress reports provided ongoing feedback to participants and participants' sponsors (such as TANF or NAFTA). Caseworkers reviewed and could amend their clients' education plans, if necessary, as clients progressed through the program. TANF agency staff noted that caseworkers could sanction cash assistance if clients showed little progress because they failed to meet the obligations designated in the plan, such as attending classes and other training sessions, without "good cause."

Services

During our visits we found that programs prepare individuals on public assistance to enter and succeed in the workforce by providing, or identifying and arranging for, a variety of services. In the following section of this chapter we describe each type of service participants might receive, including case management; instruction in vocational, life, employability, and academic skills; support services to address barriers to self-sufficiency; job placement; and postemployment support. We end this chapter with a discussion of mechanisms for coordination, and perspectives on tailoring services to meet individual participant needs.

Types of Services

Case study sites represented a variety of programmatic approaches, differing in the types of services they emphasized, their vocational focus, and their instructional environment. *Exhibit 7*, "Elements of Program Design," shows these differences across sites (*Appendix C* shows a more detailed matrix outlining the services offered by each program). Participants typically received some combination of case management, instruction, and support from case

Exhibit 7. Primary Emphases, Vocational Foci, and Instructional Environments

Program	Primary Emphasis	Vocational Focus	Instructional Environment
Advanced Technology Program	Vocational training	COBOL programmers and Administrative Support Team Members	Community college
Center for Employment Training	Vocational training, basic skills, life skills	Automated Office Skills, Shipping and Receiving Clerks/Handlers, Electronics Technology, and Medical Insurance Billing	Classroom and simulated workplace
Columbus County Joblink Career Center	Vocational training and support services	Banking, clerical, and bookkeeping	Community college and one-stop career center
Hospitality On-Site Training	On-the-job training with life-skills support	Variety of positions in the hospitality industry	On-the-job hospitality settings; classrooms in a one-stop career center and a hotel
NEW Choices	Vocational training	Variety of careers in the construction and building trades industry	Warehouse setting fitted with work stations, classroom
Parents as Scholars	Support for two- and four-year degree completion	Must pursue a "marketable" degree	Universities and technical colleges
Regional Employment Network	Information system for referral; emphasis on postemployment services	Varies by provider; see site visit report in Part 2 (Exhibit 3)	Varies by provider agency
Short-Term Job Training Programs	Short-term job skill training	Maintenance, nail care, food preparation, office support, and patient care	Community college
St. Louis Works	On-the-job training as part of a union apprenticeship program	Building trades, primarily carpentry	On-the-job training, unions' construction training school
Steps to Success	Vocational training and support	Office occupations	Community-based centers associated with a community college
Teen Parent Services	Intensive case management and service coordination	Not applicable (emphasis on high school or GED completion)	Community-based organizations
Workforce Development Programs	Vocational training and support; English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction	Computer operation, basic adult care, manufacturing	Community-based centers associated with a community college

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study programs and other organizations. The particular service emphasis of the sites we visited sometimes depended upon the agency or institution that hosted the program. TANF agencies were among those that emphasized case management, for example, while vocational and academic education were often associated with programs in community college settings. While respondents agreed that the majority of participants needed a comprehensive array of services to achieve and sustain successful employment, most programs did not actually attempt to provide the full range of services. Rather, they developed interagency agreements or other types of collaborative arrangements with providers in their communities to meet participants' needs.

Case management. TANF caseworkers held official responsibility for case management, identifying and arranging services to help them find jobs. Some respondents said that, in addition to these more defined services, case managers often performed counseling, mediation, advocacy, and referral functions in order to deliver a "quick, individualized response to problems." Beyond job finding, to help clients move toward self-sufficiency, caseworkers matched clients with services from a menu of options, to create a program for meeting individual and family needs. Illinois' "broad-based service coordination," for example, required each caseworker to manage all of the members of a family on public assistance. Working with the family as a whole, caseworkers helped clients build personal support systems by clarifying roles and expectations for each family member, as well as for service providers, in a shared effort toward successful transition off welfare. This approach "makes the whole family accountable" for each member's success without "pitting one against the other," caseworkers said. In addition to matching services with needs, caseworkers were also responsible for monitoring their clients' progress over time across service domains.

Instruction. Depending upon the program, community college faculty, certified teachers from the school district, industry specialists, and consultants provided vocational skill instruction, often combined with life skills and academics. In some cases, instructors were able to integrate basic academic skills into the vocational curriculum; in others, programs helped participants who needed basic skills to obtain instruction from another program or organization. Program staff were employees of, or provided services under contract with, the host institution or collaborating agency.

Across sites, vocational instruction targeted skills for employment in a variety of fields, including computer technology, clerical work, hospitality, construction, food preparation, health care, and manufacturing. Some programs focused on one vocational skill area while others, particularly those housed in community college settings, offered a selection of vocational areas for participants. Participants could also "cross train" for several positions within a given field.

The HOST program, for example, allowed participants to learn housekeeping, front desk attendance, and PBX operation among other skill areas in the hospitality industry. Staff at NEW Choices reported that one of the most unique aspects of their program is its emphasis on training all participants in a range of skill areas versus requiring participants to focus on a single occupation. Participants with specialized interest may receive supplemental instruction, but all participants must master skills that represent the range of talents required to succeed in a job in the construction and building trade industry.

Because of time limits and participants' motivation to begin earning a living quickly, instruction was concentrated and often work-based. Staff we interviewed described strategies for providing vocational instruction in the context of work. Some programs used Work Keys job task analysis to develop curricula specific to employment, using materials from the workplace as well as newspaper articles and other "real world" readings to increase the currency and relevance of instruction. Also in the interest of "bringing the workplace to the classroom," instructors arranged guest lectures from workers in the targeted vocational area and conducted role-playing activities to simulate various employment-related scenarios. Some respondents said that they "run classes just like a job," with strict attendance policies and dress codes. Several programs held classes eight hours a day, five days a week, to simulate a work schedule (this schedule also served to fulfill TANF work requirements in some states). Others drew upon linkages with employers for volunteers to supervise internships.

An emphasis on learning in the context of work allowed instructors to address employability and other "soft skills" while concurrently teaching vocational skills. Attention to personal skills, such as interpersonal communication and problem solving, mixed with preparation for a specific job, was an effective approach to employment readiness, according to staff. Programs also offered workshops in "life skills," addressing such topics as money management, self-advocacy, legal issues, and "coping with crisis." For young mothers in Illinois' Teen Parent Services, life skills development included career exploration activities. Such activities, rather than specific vocational training, were to "help teens think about the future."

In addition to their focus on vocational skills, case study programs addressed clients' needs for instruction in basic academic skills and preparation for the GED. In programs such as CET and NEW Choices, staff were able to "weave basic skills" into the vocational education curriculum by providing "hands-on learning" activities and by collaborating among one another to integrate educational goals. Community college programs addressed academic skill building by helping participants gain access to adult basic education services, as well as literacy, career development, continuing education, and college preparation services, on campus. Other

programs offered academic services on site or referred clients to an adult education program for basic skills remediation. Teens who participated in the Teen Parent Services program attended their local high school, an alternative high school, or participated in GED preparation either on campus at the city college, or at the program's community-based offices. Staff said that teens often preferred the on-site GED option because of smaller class sizes; this arrangement also allowed case managers to closely monitor client progress.

Programs created strategies for extending their duration in order to offer more thorough instruction and integration of vocational, employability, and academic skills. TANF time limits and the need for participants to begin earning a living, staff said, had taken away the "luxury" of several years of education. Steps to Success, for example, had expanded instructional time by offering a sequence of courses. Staff worked with case managers to approve clients' participation in several courses, each one to six weeks in duration, prior to employment. The program also made instruction available in the evenings and on the weekends so that workers could participate after they began working. Other programs extended program impact, while meeting work requirements, by combining classroom instruction with postemployment on-the-job training. Participants in HOST and NEW Choices spent part of their work week working under supervision receiving vocational skill instruction on the job and part of their week addressing employability and academic skill development in a different setting. Maine's Parents as Scholars program used state dollars to support participants who were completing of two- and four-year degrees. Because state, rather than TANF, funds paid for cash assistance and tuition reimbursement, program participants were not required to comply with PRWORA time limits.

Support services. Respondents defined "support services" as those that addressed barriers, or potential barriers, to successful job preparation, employment, and self-sufficiency. TANF increased clients' ability to participate in education and work activities by reimbursing transportation and child care costs. Some sites attempted to provide transportation and child care as part of their program to enhance participants' benefits. One case study program, for example, hired a contractor to transport participants to and from work. Another program, NEW Choices, planned to collaborate with a nonprofit organization to help graduates obtain cars so that they could drive to work. Programs also facilitated participation by offering services at multiple and community-based locations and at convenient times.

Teen Parent Services in one location contracted with a child care provider to operate a nursery on site. Caregivers provided child development activities while young mothers attend GED preparation and career exploration classes. This arrangement also allowed caregivers both to model appropriate adult-child interaction and to work directly with teen mothers on caring for

their babies. Other programs subcontracted with providers or referred their participants for support services in the areas of parenting education and health care.

In addition to providing or referring for support services, some programs facilitated the development of mentor and peer network relationships to help participants work through barriers to successful employment. At REN, some respondents reported that a well-matched client-mentor relationship improved job retention. Peer networks occurred naturally in programs that provided instruction through cohort groups and cooperative learning activities. Participants "make friends and become a family," according to program staff, creating support networks that can continue beyond the duration of the program. By arranging for graduates to visit and talk with current participants, staff also maintained relationships with former students.

Job placement. Programs taught job finding skills as part of life skills and employability instruction, made job search resources available, and held "job fairs." Staff conducted "job club" workshops, for example, targeting career exploration, interviewing, and other job search and readiness skills. Facilities posted job listings and maintained resource libraries with computers for participants' use. Job fairs brought employers to a central location to provide information to participants about vocational fields and hiring needs. Several programs linked with "Dress for Success" and other nonprofit organizations to find clothing for participants appropriate for interviews and starting a new job. Programs that placed participants directly into jobs included Steps to Success where "career placement specialists" matched participants with employers, arranged interviews, and assisted participants with the application process.

Postemployment support. Almost every respondent we interviewed cited the importance of postemployment services for job retention. As one respondent said, "The biggest challenge is keeping, not finding, jobs." HOST was one of the programs that built strategies for job retention into its array of services. HOST participants began on-the-job training as employees two weeks into the program. Instructors taught problem-solving skills by bringing participants back to the classroom on a weekly basis to discuss actual incidents that occurred on the job. HOST instructors also acted as "ombudsmen," mediating between employers and clients if problems occurred. Other programs were developing strategies for postemployment support as well. Short-Term Training staff, for example, discussed a "job coaching" program to provide on-the-job training for new employees. The role of job coach, they noted, would also create another rung in the career ladder. Job developers on staff with CET, NEW Choices, and Steps to Success continue to contact employers once participants begin work. Respondents noted that postemployment support requires strong, long-term relationships among program staff, employers, and participants.

Service Coordination

Respondents agreed that clients benefited from access to a comprehensive array of services. There was a "tension," they said, between helping clients find the services they needed and "providing all the services yourself." While a single system or agency — whether it was the TANF agency, education, or health — typically could not provide all the elements of an effective program, cooperation across systems could produce a more comprehensive approach.

Because PRWORA requires TANF agencies to construct and monitor service plans with their clients, caseworkers were often in the role of coordinating services across systems. Service coordination worked well, according to respondents, when caseworkers were well connected with other agencies and followed up with their clients. The relationship between the public assistance caseworker and the vocational instructor could also determine the extent to which participants experienced an appropriate and effective program of services. While instructors were not required to coordinate services, such staff were likely to interact with participants on a frequent, sometimes daily, basis and were therefore were able to provide helpful information to caseworkers about participants' progress and changing needs.

Communication across agencies and service providers helped ensure a coordinated program. Ongoing communication with other service providers helped caseworkers monitor client progress and helped staff coordinate activities. Close proximity afforded staff from across agencies the opportunity to communicate with frequency and regularity in programs housed with other agencies at a "one-stop" center or other multiuse facility. Proximity also gave clients convenient access to other service providers, including Head Start, mental health services, and alcohol and drug treatment. Some programs provided office space for TANF agency or other personnel to facilitate cross-system relationships. Steps to Success staff reported that co-locating various service providers had also allowed participants to develop close relationships with both case managers and instructors. From the participant perspective, staff said, service provider and service coordinator roles were "interchangeable." Participants, as well as service providers, viewed staff as a team.

Service Individualization

Respondents offered perspectives on individualizing services, a practice they cited as a goal for most providers and a bridge to success when accomplished. Clients need a broad "menu" of options for effective employment preparation, some said. The menu should include several vocational programs from which to choose and a comprehensive assessment process to help clients decide on a focus. Respondents added that such assistance would also increase program retention. Not all programs provided the thorough orientation that helped clients decide

whether or not to participate in occupationally specific vocational education courses. "People get into computer training," one respondent explained, "without really knowing what it is."

Some staff used assessment results to identify potential barriers and to direct support services to those areas of need. Services could include physical and mental health-related intervention or prevention and supplemental academic services, such as tutoring. Each participant's service plan should include all the support, but only the support, they need to find stable employment: not all clients need all services, and therefore they should not be forced through a standard routine. One respondent suggested offering multiple program "tracks:" one that offers multiple supports and services for participants who are "less ready to work," and one focusing specifically on vocational instruction and more immediate placement in a well-paying job for those who are "ready to work." Services for each individual should also evolve, respondents noted, as the client's needs change.

A respectful relationship among staff and participants also provides a firm basis for individualizing services. Working "one on one" helps staff to meet participants "where they are" and to view the individual "as a whole." We found that staff frequently engaged in informal counseling with participants who needed reassurance that they could succeed, in spite of past failures.

Chapter 6
Resources

Key Findings:

Programs needed a wide variety of resources to support the services they provided, including contributions from across sectors (TANF agencies, educational institutions, and employers).

While most programs relied on public assistance agencies for tuition reimbursement, they found additional funding support through other sources, including grants from state and federal agencies and nonprofit organizations.

Collaborating across systems increased the adequacy of program resources.

We spoke with administrators and reviewed documents about the sources of support for case study programs, in terms of both fiscal and personnel resources. We found that programs needed multiple funding and in-kind contributions to support their operations, including costs associated with personnel, facilities, materials and equipment. Key contributors to the programs were TANF agencies, education agencies and institutions, and employers. These three sectors held high stakes in programs' efforts to prepare individuals receiving public assistance for successful employment. Each partner received a payoff for its resource investment: TANF agencies found employment preparation services, education institutions gained students, and employers found workers.

In this chapter we outline areas of program expenditure and the resources key partners (TANF agencies, education agencies and institutions, and employers) contributed to the case study programs. We then identify additional sources of funding programs pursued to cover operational costs. We conclude the chapter with a discussion of the impact and benefits of multiple sources to support programs that help individuals move off welfare.

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Program Expenditures

Programs needed both funding for a program budget and in-kind contributions to support their programs. Tuition reimbursement generally provided the funds to employ administrators and other personnel on staff, or to contract with other agencies for services. The host institution generally contributed personnel and facilities, while employers might also supply facilities, as well as materials and equipment for the program.

Key personnel included administrators, instructors, case managers, and job placement specialists. All of the case study programs employed at least one administrator — in the position of director, coordinator, or program manager — who was responsible for overseeing the program. Administrators typically managed the paperwork associated with funding and reporting and acted as the liaison between the program and its host institution. The administrators also connected the program with other agencies and organizations and supervised personnel. Instructors, either on staff, under contract, or working as part of an interagency agreement, developed and implemented curricula in the areas of vocational, life skills, and academic (basic skills) education. Although instructors helped link participants with services, the "official" role of case manager typically belonged to the TANF caseworker. TANF programs employed case managers to coordinate services and, in some cases, to administer interest and skill inventories. For sites that were not part of the TANF agency, program staff cultivated collaborative relationships with caseworkers for the benefit of service coordination.

Some programs employed staff in positions that focused exclusively on job placement and retention. Such roles included "job developers" for Short-Term Training at Daytona Beach Community College and Workforce Development at El Paso Community College; the "employment specialist and retention coordinator" for NEW Choices; and "career placement specialists" for Steps to Success. In these positions, staff identified, established, and maintained relationships with potential employers. Acting as a liaison among the program, the client, and the employer, this staff member assumed responsibility for job retention as participants went to work.

In addition to personnel costs, programs paid for facilities, materials and equipment, informational materials for recruiting and, in some cases, support services. Expenditures varied from program to program, depending on the host institution and its in-kind contributions, the vocational emphasis of instructional services, the program's approach to recruiting and selecting participants, the characteristics of the program's target populations and the intensity of participants' service needs. Programs combined money from various sources for tuition reimbursement and also drew upon their own institutions for support. In some programs, for example, the host institution covered administrator salaries, while in others they were funded out

of the program's budget. For example, REN employed a full-time coordinator to oversee operations in each of its hubs, and NEW Choices hired its own staff person to coordinate services.

Sources of Support

Although there was much variation across case study programs relative to the combining of funding and in-kind contributions, we found that primary sources of support included:

- TANF agencies for tuition reimbursement, cash assistance, and case management;
- Education agencies for personnel to provide assessment and instructional services;
- Educational institutions as program hosts (community colleges) for staff salaries and facilities; and
- Employers for equipment and materials, facilities, internships, and jobs.

In addition, we found that other sources of funding allowed programs to provide additional services and to develop a particular feature of their program, such as use of technology and integrating program services with the community. Administrators learned of funding opportunities by participating in intersector groups and by attending to new federal, state, and local initiatives. Such sources of support included grants from federal, state, and local public agencies, as well as from private nonprofit organizations. We describe each of these sources of support in more detail in this section of the chapter.

TANF agencies. TANF funds, both federal and state, provided tuition reimbursement to participants in most of the programs we visited, while also providing cash assistance to clients enrolled in education and training activities. According to a GAO report on states that were early implementers of welfare reform (GAO, 1999), the TANF block grant was the principal source of funding for employment and training assistance under welfare reform. Similarly, we found that case study programs — particularly those that served primarily TANF clients — relied on federal and state TANF funds, channeled through local TANF agencies, for tuition reimbursement for individuals receiving welfare benefits.

State fiscal responsibility for public assistance increased with welfare reform (GAO, 1998) which required states to commit resources as a condition of receiving the full TANF grant and to absorb any increased costs for their programs. State funding was the principal source of support for some statewide programs, such as the Teen Parent Services program in Illinois, although participants received cash assistance from the federal TANF block grant. Maine's

Parents as Scholars (PaS) program relied exclusively on state dollars, not the TANF block grant, for both tuition reimbursement and cash assistance.[1] Although PaS served individuals who were eligible for TANF, exclusive state support for their education and cash assistance allowed participants to avoid entering the welfare rolls and, in turn, to avoid time limits and other restrictions associated with TANF.

Welfare reform brought about block grant funding to states and, at the time of the study, state and local TANF agencies were still adjusting to their new level of autonomy. One state official commented that with local spending decisions comes increasing flexibility; local officials "now have money to buy services, instead of having to look for donations." The amount of money local agencies received was also increasing because of savings in cash assistance as TANF clients moved off welfare and because of savings in administrative costs since state agencies no longer "write the check" and monitor spending. Program staff commented on the need to direct these funds to services such as postemployment job retention and advancement, GED preparation, support for persons with learning disabilities, and domestic violence intervention.

Education agencies. Education agencies contributed vocational education personnel and consultants to the case study programs. For sites that were not hosted by an educational institution, assessment and instruction were services that programs could arrange, rather than provide, through contracts or interagency agreements with local school districts, vocational education programs, or community colleges. Vocational education instructors from the local community college assessed teen parents' skills and conducted GED preparation and career exploration classes, for example, as part of a contract with TPS. In other programs, education agencies contributed personnel hours under interagency agreements, absorbing salary costs. Such personnel included local vocational education instructors who were responsible for implementing an occupationally specific curriculum and, depending upon client needs, for blending academic, ESL, and life skills with vocational training in the classroom or in the workplace. Instructors also worked with other program staff, host institution personnel, and employers to link participants with support services and to help them make the transition to work. In Ohio, a vocational education consultant on staff with the state education agency worked closely with local vocational educators, TANF agencies, and employers to replicate the HOST model. According to the consultant, she "sells the HOST model" by making presentations in service regions throughout the state and by providing technical support to interested agencies.

[1]Parents as Scholars was the only program we visited that relied solely on state funds.

Education institutions. Respondents reported that, in the role of host institution, community colleges covered staff salaries and benefits as well as facilities, maintenance, and utilities. Staff were employees of the college, including administrators, instructors, assessment specialists, and vocational guidance counselors. In addition to facilitating access to vocational education specialists, community college host institutions provided access to career exploration and resource centers on campus. Staff encouraged participants to enroll in additional coursework and to consider postsecondary options for further education.

Employers. Employers contributed a variety of resources to the case study programs. St. Louis Works, closely linked with private industry, found private sources of fiscal support from local labor unions, construction companies, and the home builders' association. The local carpenters' union provided equipment and facilities for vocational instruction. The hospitality industry provided materials and facilities for the HOST program, as well as jobs for its participants. Instructional staff worked with employers to provide internships, to facilitate or simulate learning activities in the workplace, and to facilitate work-based learning in the classroom. Employers funded some community colleges, such as the Workforce Development Programs at El Paso Community College, to develop and implement customized training.

Other funding sources. Case study programs also acquired other federal, state, and local public funds, as well resources from private organizations. Federal funds came from the Department of Education (Perkins) and DOL's JTPA and NAFTA programs. Workforce Development Programs in El Paso and Steps to Success receive DOL support for the training they provide to individuals with multiple barriers to employment, and JTPA and NAFTA funding supported tuition for displaced workers. Programs also obtained funds for general costs by applying for federal grants. At the time of the study, REN planned to submit a proposal for a Community Technology Center grant from the Department of Education. The funding, authorized under Title III of the Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999, would support centers designed to provide low-income communities with access to educational technology. The Workforce Development Programs in El Paso had collaborated with the local Workforce Development Board to apply to HUD for funding as an Enterprise Community, which would support a community center.

Other case study programs drew upon state, local, and private funds to enhance services. The state paid for REN to develop its information system in New York, and Steps to Success received state dollars to develop and pilot postemployment services on evenings and weekends. In Michigan, state funds from the lottery contributed to the Governor's Career Scholarship Program, which provided ATP participants with funds for tuition, books, and fees. We also found examples of local involvement in program funding. St. Louis' city and regional planning office

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channeled private foundation dollars to SLW to support program orientation for applicants and math tutoring for program participants. Atlanta's housing authority contributed "seed money" for the NEW Choices program. Nonprofit organizations, including the United Way and Goodwill Industries, contributed to programs such as NEW Choices in Atlanta, SLW, and ATP. SLW staff said that the United Way gave the program $30,000 to offer participants math tutoring services, while ATP also noted its use of United Way support to develop Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) for helping TANF clients purchase homes.

Multiple Sources for Program Support: Impacts and Benefits

Program administrators emphasized that no single source of funding was adequate to support the services case study programs provided. The programs were expensive in that their services are "labor-intensive." Staff worked with clients on an individual basis and with other service providers both to provide instruction and to address "peripheral issues," such as participants' domestic and personal problems. Across sites, respondents reported a need for additional staff to address complex barriers to self-sufficiency, as well as to expand in the areas of employer involvement and postemployment services. For example, the inadequacy of public funding to support a "total program" prompted the information networking system that REN created.

Relying on several sources for tuition reimbursement helped programs serve a more varied population and increase their program operation budgets. In addition to TANF, case study programs collected funds from Perkins, DOL, JTPA, and the NAFTA/TAA program. Respondents noted that administrators and staff must become conversant in the various procedures associated with reimbursement, as each agency has different eligibility criteria, requires a different set of paperwork, and reimburses on a different schedule. Administrators were still adjusting to funding streams that followed the client, rather than the program, respondents explained. Acquiring additional resources allowed programs to expand as financial assistance options helped bring more participants to programs. ATP staff noted that having several sources of support allowed the program to double the number of participants it served. At NEW Choices, the Atlanta Housing Authority and Goodwill provided the seed money for the program; however, with each new class funding sources varied depending upon student eligibility. NEW Choices staff planned to modify courses to meet the requirements of different agencies and their target populations in order to increase enrollment.

Collaborative relationships with other agencies also expanded program resources. While many vocational education instructors included life skills in their curricula (addressing such areas as budgeting, decision making, and crisis management) staff were also able to refer to, and

therefore share responsibility with, other agencies to address problems such as substance abuse. Program staff worked with TANF caseworkers and with individual clients to identify the need and arrange for such services. They called upon health agencies for prenatal care instruction, Alcoholics Anonymous to provide substance abuse intervention, and child care providers for parenting education. Collaboration at the local level, such as through participation in a one-stop career center, allowed agencies to combine forces to "tackle major issues." Referring to other agencies for support services alleviated some of the staff burden, reduced the likelihood of service duplication, and increased accountability. Respondents explained that working with other staff and with other agencies increased communication and reinforced a shared vision and commitment to the client.

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Chapter 7
Outcomes

Key Findings:

Because PRWORA does not require states to develop client-based outcome measures, programs could rely on "administrative data," rather than formal evaluations, to report progress and track outcomes.

State and program-level administrators planned to track participant outcomes for program evaluation purposes, but had not fully implemented such plans.

Program administrators predicted that funding sources, both public and private, would increasingly hold programs accountable for results, and that they would make funding contingent upon performance.

While programs intended to measure progress in terms of quantifiable outcomes, staff more often described results in terms of participants' personal growth, such as increased self-esteem.

When asked about program and participant outcomes, most administrators described "administrative" data collection and future plans for tracking program effects. Several respondents cited evaluation as an area in which they would like to invest more resources in order for program improvement. Although many of the case study sites had not undertaken formal evaluation activities, program documents and interviews provided some evidence of effectiveness based on various indicators.

In this chapter we review the data programs currently collect in order to show results to their funding sources, as well as the data they plan to collect to show that their programs are effective. We provide a discussion, based on comments from respondents, about the limitations of current accountability practices and the need for more in-depth program evaluation. We conclude by reviewing the evidence of effectiveness that the case study programs were able to provide and summarizing the common elements of program success cited by respondents.

Data Collection

The programs we visited were accountable for documenting enrollment and hours of participation for TANF clients. In addition, some states and programs were collecting data

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relative to participant outcomes. Although most had not implemented further efforts to evaluate their programs, most of the administrators we interviewed outlined plans and noted their concerns about collecting more data.

Under PRWORA, states are accountable for documenting the length of time families have received welfare benefits, and the number of hours clients work. These data help the state TANF agencies track compliance with time limits and work requirements; states report these data to the federal agency that oversees welfare reform in order to draw TANF block grant funds. As part of these reporting requirements, states typically calculate caseload reduction and job placement rates from local program enrollment and participation data. Some states, including Oregon and Ohio, also document entry-level wages, retention rates, and the mobility of families who previously received welfare benefits. A recent report on states' efforts to monitor welfare reform outcomes (Office of Inspector General, 1999) noted that some states also track changes in family income after welfare and are also attempting to measure other variables associated with family well being and parental responsibility. To this end, some states are beginning to collect outcome data in the areas of economic self-sufficiency (job retention, employment, earning, and job benefits) and welfare dependency (recidivism and use of other public assistance).

At the local level, case study program administrators we interviewed said that their data collection efforts focus on providing information to funders (including their local TANF agency) about the number of participants who have enrolled in their programs and the number who have completed the program and found jobs. A few program administrators said that they are able to track rate of job retention and advancement, and the average wages participants earned once they were employed. Documents we reviewed on programs' success tended to cite whatever outcome data administrators collect and also include honors, such as awards and other recognition, and continued funding from multiple sources as evidence of success.

Increasing Program Accountability

With block granting, the devolution of welfare administration to states, and state accountability for policy decisions, TANF agencies are newly responsible for determining how to measure program performance. According to the report from the Office of Inspector General (1999), while states planned to conduct evaluations to describe outcomes for families and children, most had not moved beyond administrative data collection and reporting to track the short-term outcomes of former TANF clients. Staff from local TANF agencies said that they are still becoming accustomed to the reporting changes; under AFDC, social services agencies tracked compliance, application processing, and cash benefit accuracy.

Local program administrators we interviewed wished for further evaluation efforts and more in-depth data collection to determine program effects and change in the status of families who have been on welfare. As the Short-Term Training program director said, "Measuring success by the number who leave welfare is not correct. Many people have left, but are not working, and no one can find them." Some of the local TANF agency staff we interviewed concurred with the need for longitudinal data. Additional staff resources, they noted, would increase their capacity to track former clients' long-term outcomes.

Respondents attributed slow progress in the area of evaluation to pressure for states to invest resources in reducing welfare caseloads and getting clients into jobs under the conditions of steadily rising work participation requirements. With the intense demands service delivery places on staff, few resources remain for program evaluation efforts. However, as state agency staff noted, welfare reform places a new emphasis on program outcomes, with less emphasis on process goals, to document effectiveness. Although PRWORA has not required states to develop client-based outcome measures, or to track progress beyond the point of program exit, staff predicted that they would soon need to track and report how programs are moving families from welfare to work.

Program administrators also predicted continued movement toward accountability to clients and funders, and that funding would be increasingly contingent upon performance. Several respondents described "performance-based funding" procedures, especially for private dollars, that include goals or "benchmarks." Although programs such as Short-Term Training at Daytona Beach Community College and NEW Choices received payment on a fixed-cost basis, they had begun to submit performance data to private funders in order to document progress. SLW indicated that participants must complete a certain number of orientation sessions in order for the program to receive full funding from one of its private sponsors.

In addition to increased accountability to private funding sources, respondents said that changes associated with implementation of WIA would include reporting to local workforce development boards, thereby increasing program accountability and forcing programs to document progress more fully. Although not yet informed of performance indicator requirements, several administrators described their intent to use these and other data to track outcomes for program evaluation purposes.

Some respondents looked forward to developing program evaluation efforts. JobLink and ATP directors noted that the communication processes involved in gathering feedback from and reporting successes to employers and customers ultimately help their efforts. "The program really took off when partners could see results," one respondent said. "It's important to give everyone credit for their contributions." Others noted that program evaluation should include

documentation of positive changes related to participation in an intersector partnership, as well as personal growth participants attribute to involvement in the programs. Staff from HOST and Steps to Success, for example, commented that employers had made gains as a result of program and participant progress. Employers were "more invested" in the training programs and were more sensitive and responsive to employees' needs. In addition, HOST staff said, the local hotel industry was "more united" as a result of their partnership with the program.

Evidence of Effectiveness and Common Elements of Program Success

During the course of our case studies, administrators reported data that described program and participant outcomes. The majority of programs were able to report the number of students enrolled; some were also able to provide figures describing how many participants had completed the program and how many participants had found work. A few programs tracked job retention, one program tracked career advancement, and half estimated average wages. While these data are interesting within the context of the case study reports,[1] variations in data collection methods and reporting practices across programs prohibit a valid cross-site analysis of this evidence of effectiveness. Qualitative data, however, reveal shared personal growth outcomes that reflect positively on program services.

A variety of respondents (including administrators, collaborative partners, and participants) emphasized that perhaps the most important effect of the case study programs was the "empowerment and confidence building" that participants experienced as a result of their involvement in services. Staff said that clients entered the program after many personal failures and emerged with new self-esteem. Participants we interviewed also described their changes at a personal level. Some said they had not believed, prior to program participation, that they were capable of earning a living in the workforce. Most participants credited the program staff for encouraging them to set and accomplish goals. Several of the programs, for example, honored the participants by awarding certificates and plaques during a graduation ceremony at the end of each course. New Choices staff said that participants who were doubtful about their own capabilities learn as a result of their efforts that "there are no limitations."

Program staff attributed their success to various aspects of their structure, services, and resources. As discussed throughout our report, common elements of success cited by case study respondents included:

- Training for jobs that pay well, present career ladders, and are in sustained demand in the local labor market;

[1]Please see *Volume II* for detailed case studies describing each program and its effects.

- Offering enhanced employment potential by providing access to advanced training opportunities;
- Integrating basic and soft skills;
- Offering support services and activities (e.g., hands on training) that facilitate participation, retention, and, therein, success;
- Instituting collaboration and mechanisms that facilitate inter-agency partnerships;
- Fostering employer involvement; and
- Recognizing and responding to program context (e.g., TANF guidelines, economic development initiatives, local employment and political environments).

Through these practices, vocational education programs can contribute to effective workforce preparation, increasing the likelihood that an individual formerly receiving welfare benefits will obtain a job that offers a living wage and the potential for advancement and, therein, decreasing the likelihood that she will need to rely on welfare in the future.

Chapter 8
Program Abstracts

Advanced Technology Program
Oakland Community College (Pontiac, Michigan)

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION/TRAINING FOR TANF RECIPIENTS

Oakland Community College's (OCC's) Advanced Technology Program (ATP) prepares welfare recipients who have a high school diploma or GED for high-paying jobs, including careers in robotics technology and computer systems administration. Working with employers who are willing to hire at least 10 graduates for jobs that offer starting salaries of $20,000 or more, fringe benefits, and opportunities for advancement, ATP provides:

- **customized, short-term job training that emphasizes both technical and "soft" skills;**
- **paid one-month internships that "plug the gap between class and work"; and**
- **extensive pre- and post-employment support services**

The Advanced Technology Program (ATP) ensures that its services will benefit participants through a combination of ***academic assessments and behavioral interviews***. To enroll in the program, individuals must score at the 10th grade level or higher in reading on the Test of Adult Basic Education and demonstrate adequate life skills and a positive attitude.

ATP facilitates success within the program and on the job through an ***extensive array of pre- and post-employment support services***. These services are enhanced by ***practices that enable the prompt identification of need for and provision of individualized services***, including in-house case management, a periodic performance review process, and ongoing communication between the program coordinator and employer representatives.

An interorganizational ***task force*** that includes representatives from the college, area businesses, and a variety of local service providers guides ATP's activities. By sustaining collaborative relationships among all of the organizations involved in welfare-to-work activities, the task force allows ATP to readily address the many barriers that program participants encounter.

Contextual factors have influenced ATP's successful implementation and replication. These factors include structural linkages between the state's welfare agency and workforce development boards, support from a powerful advocate (State Representative Hubert Price, Jr.), and the availability of high-paying, high-tech jobs in Oakland County.

We have [staff members] addressing all barriers and life issues so that participants get soft skills they haven't had before . . .

Staff member, Advanced Technology Program

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Center for Employment Training
(Research Triangle Park, North Carolina)

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION/TRAINING FOR TANF RECIPIENTS

Research Triangle Park's Center for Employment Training (CET) is one of 40 centers that use the California-based nonprofit's model to prepare disadvantaged individuals for entry-level positions in specific careers. The program relies on classroom instruction that integrates basic skills, human development, and vocational training to prepare participants for work in one of four skill areas.

The Center for Employment Training (CET) ***increases the employability of program participants*** by providing them with skills for which there is a sustained demand in the local labor market and preparing them for careers that hold the potential for advancement. Program services include:

- vocational training* in a simulated work environment
- life skills workshops
- job development activities
- employment resource center
- assistance with child care and transportation.

*The four training programs offered at the RTP site include: Electronics Technology, Shipping/Receiving and Warehouse Operations, Automated Office Skills, and Medical Insurance Billing.

CET ***enhances the academic as well as the technical abilities of program participants*** by integrating basic skills training and vocational education. Progress through the programs is competency-based, allowing students to work at a pace appropriate to their individual abilities and personal circumstances.

CET ***facilitates retention within its programs*** by fostering participants' self-confidence (through hands-on training and a committed and caring staff) and promoting peer support (through peer teaching and contact with program graduates). Ongoing contact with the program's Job Developer ***helps ensure that students obtain and retain jobs***.

By ***establishing and maintaining organizational linkages with business and industry***, CET is able to obtain needed input regarding curriculum development and program implementation, hence tailoring its training to the needs of local employers.

We're in a movement . . . We're not just service providers.

Staff member, Center for Employment Training

Columbus County JobLink Career Center
Southeastern Community College (Whiteville, North Carolina)

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION/TRAINING FOR TANF RECIPIENTS

The Columbus County JobLink Career Center addresses the extensive needs of welfare participants through *Ladder to Success*, a comprehensive welfare-to-work program that facilitates economic self-sufficiency within the time limits imposed by welfare reform. This program provides participants with intensive job readiness, job placement, post-employment, and job retention services and sustains employer involvement by offering employability coaches, on-the-job and other post-employment training, financial assistance with training new employees, and pre-arranged child care.

The Columbus County JobLink Career Center offers a ***comprehensive range of services targeted to both prospective workers and employers.***

Services for persons seeking employment or advancement include:

- employment resource center
- literacy, career, and personal assessments
- counseling and referrals
- employment readiness and preparation training
- short and long-term skills training
- job placement and follow-up.

Services for employers include:

- labor market information
- resumes and referrals
- interview assistance
- customized training
- layoff aversion services.

Center services reflect a ***holistic, customer-driven approach*** to meeting the needs of unemployed and underemployed persons. The center's community college affiliation provides customers with direct access to literacy programs, continuing education courses, and associate's degree programs; this affiliation also helps to reaffirm the center's role as an ***educational resource***. Through its incorporation of open-entry/open-exit vocational course sequences, the center provides customers with ***skills needed not only to enter but also to advance in the workforce***.

The center facilitates customer participation in its programs through ***responsive structuring*** (varied hours of operation, multiple and community-based course locations) as well as a ***wide array of supplemental support services*** (monies for program fees, child care services, and transportation, referral to community agencies). The ***involvement of dozens of local, regional, and state agencies as well as employers*** in program development and implementation greatly enhances the range of services that the center is able to provide.

Multiple barriers need to be addressed before you can place demands on individuals . . . .
Steering Committee Member, Columbus County JobLink Career Center

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Hospitality On-Site Training
Ohio Hotel and Lodging Association and
Ohio Department of Education
(Columbus and Dayton, Ohio)

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION/TRAINING FOR TANF RECIPIENTS

Ohio's Hospitality On-Site Training (HOST) program provides individuals receiving public assistance with employment and training in the hospitality industry. Participants enter the nine-month, 30-hour per week training program as employees, thereby satisfying TANF work requirements. Program components include:

- **classroom instruction,**
- **on-the-job training, and**
- **job retention support.**

The Hospitality On-Site Training Program (HOST) utilizes a ***proficiency-based client selection process*** to increase the likelihood that participants will succeed both in the program and on the job. Assessments test each individual's aptitude for targeted occupational skills, and participants must obtain employment prior to training.

HOST provides ***job-specific training*** for several positions within the hospitality industry. By allowing participants to prepare for multiple positions or "***cross train***," HOST increases individuals' employment prospects. In addition to vocational skills training, HOST's classroom instruction and support services emphasize communication, time management, problem solving, and other ***practices that facilitate job retention***.

HOST is a ***public/private partnership*** that involves state and county welfare and education agencies, adult vocational education institutions, and the hospitality industry. The program's ***cross-system approach*** provides participants with a comprehensive set of opportunities for training, skill building, and work. HOST requires ***substantial employer investment***. In return, the program provides local businesses with ***employees who possess technical skills and knowledge as well as soft skills***. The program has also served to increase employer sensitivity and responsiveness to barriers to workforce participation such as transportation and child care.

HOST maintains a relatively ***inexpensive per-participant cost*** by offering training that is short-term and capitalizing on the resources (including space and equipment) of its business partners.

HOST picks up where the system leaves off, going beyond the much oversimplified formula of job placement as the one solution to welfare reform . . .

Publicity brochure, Hospitality On-Site Training

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NEW Choices
Goodwill Industries of North Georgia, Inc. (Atlanta, Georgia)

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION/TRAINING FOR TANF RECIPIENTS

The NEW (Nontraditional Employment for Women) Choices prepares low-income females with employment barriers for careers in construction and building trades. The 11-week in-house program incorporates vocational skills training, trades math, and job readiness and survival skills, as well as a variety of pre- and post-employment support services. At the time of our visit, staff members were in the process of modifying the program to include both in-house instruction and paid on-the- job training to comply more readily with Georgia's work requirements under TANF.

The NEW (Nontraditional Employment for Women) Choices program, operated by Goodwill Industries of North Georgia, offers participants a ***holistic core program*** and ***comprehensive array of pre- and post-employment support services***.

Core program components include:

- vocational skills training
- physical conditioning
- trades math
- history of women in the trades
- job readiness
- survival skills for women
- fee sponsorship
- funding for child care, transportation, and meals
- career and personal counseling and referrals
- job placement
- post-program participation in the *Atlanta Tradeswomen's NETwork*
- post-program follow-up and consultation

Support services include:

NEW Choices combines ***hands-on job skills training*** with ***basic skills instruction in a functional context***. Program staff use a ***team building approach*** to develop a support network among program participants and, therein, foster retention and success.

NEW Choices greatly enhances the ***employment potential*** of its participants by preparing each student for a variety of jobs and enabling each student to earn several certifications. The program's emphasis on the profitable construction and building trades industry offers students the opportunity to earn a ***substantial wage*** upon entering the workforce.

From its inception, NEW Choices has solicited the ***guidance, participation, and support of various stakeholders***, especially representatives from local businesses, unions, and industry associations. By ***blending funds*** from both public and private sources, the staff provides its program at no cost to participants.

*The entire training program is about **empowerment** . . . . We try to teach [students] to create communities, to look at each other as a resource, and to really take on that persona of being a new tradeswoman and the strength that comes with that.*

Program Manager, NEW Choices

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Parents as Scholars
Department of Human Services (Augusta, Maine)

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION/TRAINING FOR TANF RECIPIENTS

Developed in response to welfare reform, Parents as Scholars (PaS) uses state maintenance of effort funds to provide participants with benefits comparable to those received through TANF (including monthly cash assistance, child care, and Medicaid) while they participate in a full-time combination of education, training, study, and/or work-site experience. Participants are responsible for selecting and applying to a postsecondary institution, as well as financing their schooling. The time that an individual spends in PaS does not count toward his or her TANF lifetime limit.

Maine's Parents as Scholars (PaS) program enables individuals who are eligible for TANF to ***enroll in two- and four-year programs offered by universities and technical colleges*** throughout the state prior to entering the workforce. PaS offers a great deal of ***flexibility***, allowing each participant to select her own school and program, provided that the course of study increases employability.

As students at postsecondary institutions, PaS participants have ***access to a variety of campus resources*** including personal counseling sessions, job opportunities, job search assistance, parenting support groups, cooperative education, wellness programs, on-campus housing, and child care.

Proponents of PaS facilitated its implementation by ***lobbying both the legislature and the public for support***. University and technical college representatives and advocacy groups worked together to develop the program's enabling legislation and to counter public opposition to the idea of postsecondary education for welfare recipients.

In order to foster the extensive ***interagency collaboration*** that PaS requires, the state offered a ***joint training program*** which brought together state, regional, and local DHS personnel, as well as admissions and financial aid staff from a variety of postsecondary institutions. This activity provided a much-needed opportunity for social service providers and postsecondary educators to share information about their services and develop working relationships. These groups continue to interact through ***representation on the state's TANF advisory committee and PaS subcommittee***.

Individuals who enroll in PaS "... are the part of the welfare population that [is] going to be successful," because they have the motivation, life skills, and coping abilities necessary to manage the demands of both family and school.

Official, State Department of Human Services, Maine

Regional Employment Network — Erie County
Buffalo ACCESS Center (Buffalo, New York)

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION/TRAINING FOR TANF RECIENTS

The Regional Employment Network (REN) is the collaborative effort of 12 employment and training agencies in Erie County, New York. Through common assessment and intake procedures, use of a shared information system, and interagency referrals, the network enables participating organizations to provide comprehensive services to adults. These services includes:

- **Assessment**
- **Basic skills training**
- **Case management**
- **Career counseling**
- **Crisis management**
- **Child care**
- **Clothing and equipment**
- **Communication skills training**
- **Computer skills training**
- **ESL instruction**
- **English usage and diction**
- **Family support groups**
- **GED preparation**
- **Job coaching**
- **Job placement**
- **Job readiness training**
- **Job retention services**
- **Job search**
- **Job shadowing**
- **Job site visits**
- **Life skills training**
- **Mental health services**
- **Mentoring**
- **Post-employment services**
- **Referrals**
- **Remedial literacy and math**
- **Skills enhancement**
- **Soft skills training**
- **Transportation**
- **Vocational education**
- **Work-based education**
- **Workplace liaisons**
- **Workplace literacy**

By institutionalizing ***practices that facilitate collaboration*** (such as common assessment and intake procedures, use of a shared information system, and interagency referrals), the Regional Employment Network (REN) enables agencies to serve a broader client base and provide each individual with a range of services. The network employs a ***"no wrong door" design***, allowing clients to enter the network through and receive appropriate services from any participating or co-located agency.

To increase the efficiency of the network, participating ***programs are organized into four "hubs"*** located in various parts of the county. One agency within each hub assumes responsibility for collecting performance data, interfacing with business representatives and other program partners, and monitoring service provision.

REN's ***shared electronic information system*** facilitates case management and service provision by enabling counselors to obtain immediate approval for training activities, allowing network members to access information about clients, and providing a user-friendly format for documenting data on program participation and retention.

Too often, local entities think of collaboration as a relationship that involves only two agencies, rather than a network of providers.

Representative, Regional Employment Network

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Short-Term Job Training Programs
Daytona Beach Community College (Daytona Beach, Florida)

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION/TRAINING FOR TANF RECIPIENTS

In response to welfare reform, the staff members of Daytona Beach Community College's (DBCC's) Division of Adult Education and Training designed a series of short-term job training programs that provide welfare participants with skills needed to successfully enter the workforce within the time limits imposed by current legislation. In addition, DBCC is piloting a remedial program for welfare participants with low basic skills as well as developing a job coaching program designed to enable incumbent workers to earn a living wage.

Based on the premise of enabling welfare participants to earn a living wage relatively quickly, Daytona Beach Community College's (DBCC's) short-term job training programs ***target occupations that present job opportunities in the local labor market and hold potential for advancement***. The programs (which include Building Maintenance, Computer Repair Technology, Customer Service, Food Preparation, Nail Technician, Office Support Technology, Patient Care Assistant, and Polyester Reinforced Fiberglass Manufacturing), offer participants:

- hands-on vocational training
- life skills and job readiness activities
- job placement services, and
- job coaching.
- an informal support group

DBCC facilitates participant success by ***screening applicants*** and ***targeting program services to those students with the academic ability to succeed***. Applicants with low basic skills are required to enroll in the college's Vocational Preparatory Instruction labs prior to or, in cases of minor remediation, concurrently with their vocational skills training. DBCC ***capitalizes on the comprehensive occupational and basic skills assessment services developed through its vocational education programs*** by offering these services to other welfare-to-work agencies.

To promote continued learning, DBCC has ***incorporated its short-term job training programs into its open entry/open exit series of occupational completion points***. As postsecondary vocational education courses, the programs ***enable participants to earn vocational credits***, and, by incorporating the essential competencies from advanced college courses, ***prepare participants to transition into occupational certificate and Associate of Science degree programs***.

The key to it is to gather up the competencies and make sure that you're giving competencies that relate to the marketable work world . . . .

Dean, Daytona Beach Community College, Division of Adult Education and Training

St. Louis Works
The St. Louis Works Partnership (St. Louis, Missouri)

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION/TRAINING FOR TANF RECIPIENTS

St. Louis Works (SLW) offers residents of the St. Louis area the opportunity to apprentice in one of 22 building trades. About one-third of the individuals who attended recruiting sessions during its first few months of operation were TANF recipients. The program provides a general orientation to the building trades, tutoring sessions to help applicants prepare for the entry-level math tests that unions require, and classroom training as part of three- to five-year registered apprenticeships.

Saint Louis Works (SLW), an affiliate of the Washington, DC-based America Works Partnership, offers any individual who is unemployed, underemployed, or interested in making a career change the opportunity to ***apprentice in one of 22 building trades***.

Partnership services include:

- a one-week orientation that provides a general introduction to the building trades
- referrals to contractors who are currently hiring entry-level apprentices
- math tutoring sessions designed to help applicants prepare for the entry-level math tests that unions require
- classroom training
- three- to five-year registered apprenticeships.

SLW allows participants to ***become employed quickly*** by offering instruction through a series of "skill blocks"; the ones that an apprentice selects depend to some extent on the type of work that he is doing. SLW has recently developed ***articulation agreements*** with three community colleges that will award credits toward an Associate of Applied Science degree for completion of the skill blocks.

SLW ***benefits employers*** by providing them with a pool of entry-level workers who are informed about the demands of the construction industry and likely to be satisfied with their jobs. In exchange, employers provide on-the-job-training, pay their apprentices' wages, and provide a small transportation stipend. The Partnership's ***focus on the construction industry*** coincides with the needs of the St. Louis labor market and offers individuals access to good wages without a great deal of formal education.

While SLW relies on outside agencies to provide apprentices with support services, the Partnership has instituted ***innovative solutions to the problem of transportation*** including a "motor pool," which allows apprentices to borrow cars at the city's MetroLink stations on the condition that they deposit 15 percent of their take-home pay into an Individual Development Account. The Partnership hopes to match each dollar that the employee deposits with 50 cents from other sources, so that apprentices will have enough money to buy a used car at the end of a 10-week borrowing period.

The most important thing to us is attitude and willingness. Training happens mostly on the job. Skills are teachable, but if you have attitude and willingness, there is a place for you somewhere.

Partnership representative, St. Louis Works

Steps to Success
Mt. Hood Community College and Portland Metropolitan Workforce Training Center (Portland, Oregon)

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION/TRAINING FOR TANF RECIPIENTS

Steps to Success offers a sequence of short-term vocational training courses that prepare participants for clerical work in local businesses. Instructors build life skills development into the vocational courses. Career specialists work closely with TANF caseworkers and employers to place program graduates in jobs and to help participants make a successful transition to the work place.

Designed to provide training and support for individuals who are in a career transition because of a change in the workforce or in their personal lives, Steps to Success provides ***a combination of employment preparation and job retention services.***

Program services include:

- vocational assessment and training
- work experience
- career and life skills guidance and activities
- adult basic education and GED preparation
- employment resource room
- job placement
- post-employment retention services.

The creators of Steps to Success ***designed the program to meet the needs of the legislature, clients, and the community*** by accommodating TANF time limits, prospective participants' potential, employers' demands, and labor market trends. The program ***benefits area employers*** by recruiting, training, and referring qualified personnel. It ***benefits participants*** by providing training, support, and, ultimately, job placement in positions that offer benefits, advancement potential, and a living wage.

In addition to training and support services, Steps to Success prepares participants for employment through ***policies that mimic employer expectations***. For example, Steps requires that participants arrange their own child care and transportation as a condition of acceptance into courses. In addition, Steps to Success' short-term training programs have mandatory attendance requirements.

Steps to Success' career placement specialists ***build long-term relationships*** with both employers and clients. These relationships ***enhance job retention*** by facilitating subsequent communication regarding issues and situations that threaten past program participants' continued employment.

By ***relying on other agencies to provide various support services***, Steps to Success staff can focus on the integrity of job preparation and retention, while still offering participants access to other needed resources.

Steps services "empower individuals to enter the workforce, support themselves and their families, improve their quality of life, and become a viable force in the community."

Publicity brochure, Steps to Success

Teen Parent Services
Illinois Department of Health and Human Services (Chicago, Illinois)

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION/TRAINING FOR TANF RECIPIENTS

Teen Parent Services (TPS), an Illinois Department of Human Services program, assists its clientele in identifying, acquiring, and coordinating services that will hasten progress toward self-sufficiency. Most program participants are young, single mothers receiving welfare benefits. TPS staff are TANF caseworkers who ensure that their clients receive such services as on-site GED preparation courses and health education, as well as career and life skill development.

Teen Parent Services (TPS) is a statewide program that supports young parents receiving welfare benefits in order for them to complete their ***secondary education***.

Program services include:

- educational assessment and instruction
- intensive case management
- individualized counseling
- reimbursement for child care and transportation
- social service referrals and follow-up
- activities of interest and concern to the teen parent (e.g., life skills and job readiness).

To facilitate success, program staff ***monitor participants' progress daily***, communicating on an ongoing basis with schools and agencies to coordinate service delivery and ensure school attendance. Caseworkers can impose sanctions against teen parents who fail to participate.

TPS utilizes ***broad-based service coordination*** through which one case manager serves all of the members of a family. This arrangement provides case workers with insight into environmental barriers to self-sufficiency and, in turn, a greater likelihood of enabling families to address those barriers.

Interorganizational relationships among service agencies in the community create a comprehensive network of support for TPS and its clients. Chicago's TPS programs, for example, rely heavily on the involvement of the local city colleges, which provide GED preparation programs and access to other campus resources such as vocational assessment and counseling.

To assist young persons in obtaining information, services, and skills necessary to: obtain and maintain their mental and physical health and that of their children; plan for their future well being; and become self sufficient . . . .

Program goals, Teen Parent Services

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Workforce Development Programs
El Paso Community College (El Paso, Texas)

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION/TRAINING FOR TANF RECIPIENTS

El Paso Community College (EPCC) designed its Workforce Development Programs to provide shorter-term training options for El Paso's unemployed workers. Course offerings include computer operations for employment in local businesses and basic adult care for jobs as a home health aide or other caregiver. Staff respond to participants with limited English proficiency by providing bilingual instruction and linking participants with English as a Second Language (ESL) services.

El Paso Community College's (EPCC's) Workforce Development Programs offer ***vocational training, tutoring, and guidance and counseling services*** for city residents receiving public assistance. Programs include:

- ***joint vocational education and basic skills training*** that prepares participants for work in occupations such as computer operations and basic adult care; and
- ***bilingual job skills training*** that prepares participants for work in occupations such as computers, plastics, electricity, basic adult care, and child care.

Workforce Development Program participants have access to EPCC's bilingual college and GED preparation courses as well as instruction in English as a Second Language (ESL); these resources both ***enhance the effectiveness of participants' vocational training and increase their employability***. The college also maintains a resource center that allows participants to engage in ***career exploration activities***, which help participants identify interests, evaluate options, and choose a vocation.

EPCC's course offerings and practices are aligned with the goals and objectives of various economic development initiatives as well as those of the local workforce development board; this ***alignment*** enables EPCC to receive monies from a variety of agencies and funding streams.

Flexibility on the part of program staff helps them accommodate each participant's individual barriers and capitalize on their strengths.

Accommodating programs to students' individual needs brings about success.
Instructor, Workforce Development Programs, El Paso Community College

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Glossary

Apprenticeships: Programs that include both classroom instruction and on-the-job training that pair trainees with experienced workers. Most commonly used in the building trades, where "registered" apprenticeships approved by the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training lead to certification as a "journeyman," or fully qualified worker.

Case management: To assist clients in obtaining and retaining employment, TANF agency personnel act as "case managers," identifying and arranging for a variety of services. Case management services may include assessment, referral, development of an individualized service delivery plan, counseling, coordination of services and activities, and monitoring and evaluating the client's progress.

Customized job training: Training programs, often provided by community colleges, designed to prepare participants for employment in a specific company. Curricula are tailored to suit the employer's needs, often with input from managers and front-line workers.

Employability (or "soft") skills: Work and life skills that help individuals succeed in obtaining and retaining employment; e.g., punctuality, ability to manage time efficiently, professional demeanor and dress, reliability, positive attitude toward work, problem solving, crisis management, and budgeting. May also include career and life planning.

Employer involvement: Relationships between organizations that provide vocational education services to TANF clients and employers, including participation in curriculum development; provision of internship, apprenticeship, and work experience placements; designation of work-site mentors; participation in special events; and contribution of materials and facilities.

Hard-to-serve: Generally refers to individuals who require extensive services to obtain and retain employment. At the time of our study, individuals receiving services funded by the U.S. Department of Labor's welfare to-work program were required to have two of three "labor market deficiencies" (including lack of a high school diploma or GED, requiring substance abuse treatment for employment, and poor work history) in order to qualify as hard-to-serve.

Nontraditional careers: Generally refers to occupations historically held primarily by men or primarily by women. The Perkins Act defines "nontraditional training and employment" as "...occupations or fields of work, including careers in computer science, technology, and other emerging high skill occupations, for which individuals from one gender comprise less than 25 percent of the individuals employed in each such occupation or field of work" (Section 3(17)).

On-the-job training: Training that takes place in the work environment after an individual is employed. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) allows states to count the hours that TANF clients spend in on-the-job training toward work participation rates, although the exact definition of the activity is left to individual states.

One-stop career center: Established under grants from the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration, one-stop career centers house a number of employment and training programs at a single location. The Workforce Investment Act

(WIA) of 1998 (Public Law 105-220) designates a number of programs (including postsecondary vocational education, adult education, and vocational rehabilitation) as "key partners" in the one-stop system, and requires them to deliver certain services through the one-stops.

Perkins Act: The Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Act (Public Law 105-332); federal legislation under which states receive funds to support secondary and postsecondary vocational education. The current version of the legislation ("Perkins III") was enacted in 1998.

Postemployment services: Services provided after an individual begins work in order to promote retention and advancement. May include case management, counseling, on-the-job training, or other education and training.

Private Industry Councils (PICs): Local entities that were responsible for administration of Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) programs. With expanded membership, some PIC's became local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 (Public Law 105-220).

Resource blending: Combining financial and nonfinancial resources from a variety of sources to support a program that provides vocational education services to TANF clients.

Social services: Agencies that provide human services (e.g., emergency financial aid; help with legal problems; health care; child welfare services; crisis intervention; or assistance with food, clothing, and housing).

Support services: Ancillary services that enable TANF clients to obtain and retain employment. May include a variety of services such as transportation, child care, health care, counseling, or life skills training.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF): Created by the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), TANF is the primary program through which states provide cash assistance to low-income families with minor children.

Vocational rehabilitation: Authorized under Title IV of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 (Public Law 105-220), the state-federal vocational rehabilitation program is a "required partner" in the one-stop system. The program assists eligible individuals with disabilities to achieve an employment outcome consistent with their vocational goals through delivery of a wide array of educational, training and support services.

Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs): Created by the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 (Public Law 105-220), local WIBs are responsible for overseeing operation of the one-stop career centers and for certifying agencies that are eligible to receive training funds.

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Appendix A
Advisory Working Group Members

Advisory Working Group Members

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Appendix B
Literature Review

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Literature Review

Literature Review

To inform the selection of case study sites, and to identify topics for investigation during the site visits, RTI conducted a review of literature on the use of vocational education to train and place welfare recipients into the workforce, including promising practices for training specific groups of interest. The review concentrated on two areas:

- ***Key provisions of PRWORA,*** including work participation requirements, limitations placed on education and training, and vocational education caps. Within the framework of these requirements, we identified a number of opportunities for states to shape vocational education services for adults and teen parents who are receiving welfare benefits.
- ***Programmatic approaches, or models, for delivering vocational education services to TANF clients.*** Although there was considerable variation in programmatic approaches — much of it due to state and local flexibility — we identified several models that were differentiated by individuals' levels of participation in various categories of work activity (i.e., vocational education alone, in combination with other work activities, or after employment).

This appendix describes our findings in each area. It also includes a discussion of the implications of the literature review for study operations.

Key Provisions of PRWORA and Opportunities for State Decision Making

According to the literature on welfare reform, states must follow specific guidelines in order to draw TANF funds. Federal guidelines include work participation rates that apply to all families, with a required number of work hours per week that increases annually until the year 2000. Allowable training and education activities are limited for adults, while teen parents must be enrolled in an educational program.

In this section we describe the work participation rates states must meet according to federal law, the restrictions placed upon vocational education as an allowable work activity, and opportunities for states to shape programs. Included in this discussion are the differential requirements applicable to adults and teen parents receiving welfare support.

Key Provisions of PRWORA

PRWORA emphasizes employment and work-related activities that lead directly to employment, with limitations placed on education and training for people receiving welfare benefits. Key provisions of the statute that affect access to vocational education include the following.

Work participation requirements. To receive TANF benefits, welfare participants must engage in work activities. The Institute for Women's Policy Research summarizes these work participation requirements as follows:

- Thirty percent of all single parents receiving TANF must work 20 hours per week, increasing to 30 hours per week for 50 percent of single parents by fiscal year 2000;
- Seventy-five percent of two-parent families must work at least 35 hours per week, increasing to 90 percent by 2002;
- Two-parent families receiving federally funded child care subsidies must work 55 hours per week (the 55 hours can be divided between the couple);
- Thirty percent of those classified as working can participate in vocational training that counts as work for the purposes of the statute;
- Those who are counted as working through participation in vocational training can only do so for 12 months; and
- For fiscal year 2000 and thereafter, the 30 percent cap on those who can participate in vocational training will also include parents under the age of 20 who are engaged in education directly related to employment, or who are completing high school or its equivalent (IWPR, 1998).

TANF requirements for teen parents include the following:

- A single head of household under 20 years of age is counted as working if the individual maintains satisfactory attendance at secondary school or the equivalent; or participates in education directly related to employment for at least the required number of hours per week;
- Unmarried parents without a high school diploma or equivalent, who are under age 18 with a child who is at least 12 weeks old, cannot receive TANF benefits unless they are participating in an educational program directed toward receipt of a high school diploma or its equivalent; and
- Teen parents cannot receive TANF benefits unless they are living in an adult-supervised setting (IWPR, 1997).

Limitations placed on education and training. The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) notes that while TANF provisions for teen parents emphasize educational programs,

education options for adults that satisfy TANF work requirements are limited to "vocational training." PRWORA limits both the number of adults who can participate in vocational training and education and the duration of time that can be invested in such activities. As CLASP (Strawn, 1998b) summarizes, key aspects of the limitations on education and training under federal welfare law are:

- Penalties states face if they do not meet federal work participation rates;
- Education and training activities that can count toward the first 20 hours of required participation for adults must fit into the category called "vocational training";
- States' definitions of "vocational training";
- A one-year limit on the amount of time that any individual who is counted as working can participate in vocational training; and
- The overall cap on the total number of vocational training participants that states can count as working.

Vocational education caps. The cap on vocational training is set at 30 percent of each year's work participation rate for states. In other words, as Strawn (1998a) explains, the 30 percent work rate for fiscal year 1998 means that 9 percent of participants in each state can be engaged in vocational training (30 percent of a 30 percent work rate). For fiscal year 1999, when the work rate is 35 percent, 10.5 percent of participants can be in vocational education (30 percent of a 35 percent work rate), and so on. From fiscal year 2000 forward, as noted above, this cap will include teen parents who are receiving welfare benefits and are engaged in education activities. Including teen parents will displace a considerable number of adults who would otherwise be allowed to engage in vocational education activity that counts toward federal work rates (Strawn, 1998a).

State Decision Making

Within the framework of TANF requirements, welfare reform gave states latitude in the development and implementation of welfare-to-work programs. Our preliminary review of information available on states' implementation of PRWORA identified a number of opportunities for states to shape vocational education services for adults and teen parents who are receiving welfare benefits. Among these decision points are: (1) definitions of work activities, (2) conditions and requirements for adult participation, (3) allocation of state resources, and (4) school attendance options for teen parents

Definitions of work activities. States define the following activities that count as work under PRWORA:

- Vocational training;
- Unsubsidized or subsidized employment;
- On-the-job training;
- Work experience;
- Community service;
- Child care services to individuals who are participating in community service; and
- Job search activities (Administration of Children, Youth and Families, 1996).

Some states have defined "vocational training" in such a way as to allow people receiving welfare benefits to fulfill the work requirement entirely by participating in vocational education, while in other states training and education are combined with other work activities. For example, one way for states to permit "stand-alone" education for people receiving welfare benefits is to define "vocational training" to include postsecondary education, so that courses and programs in community colleges and other postsecondary institutions count as work activity (OVAE fact sheet). According to CLASP, states that allow more than 12 months of education or training as a stand-alone work activity include California, Iowa, Maine, Missouri, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, and Wyoming (L. Plimpton, personal communication, October 20, 1998).

Other states have reported adopting broad definitions to allow participants to engage in different configurations of training, education, and work, depending upon individual need. New York, for example, defined the category of "vocational training" to include both shorter-term training and traditional coursework. New York and New Jersey also aligned their definitions of community service and on-the-job training with their definitions of vocational training, enabling programs in those states to extend PRWORA's 12-month limit on training and education.

Conditions and requirements for adult participation. In addition to definitions that permit linking of activities, states can set conditions and requirements for participation that allow individuals to combine activities to fulfill work requirements. States can determine their program's configuration of work and training hours, such as the number of hours participants must work in order to be eligible for training, and whether education services are available before and after employment. In a report that describes how welfare programs can serve people who are "hard to place," Kramer (1998) noted that states can set eligibility criteria targeting education

services to participants who are not able to find work through job search strategies alone, or who are employed but need higher wages, and so on (Kramer, 1998). In our preliminary literature review, we found that conditions and requirements for participation may be set at the local level. San Diego's South Bay GAIN Employability Center, for example, targets services to individuals who participated in, but did not find employment through, job search activities (Murphy & Johnson, 1998).

Allocation of state resources. States can use their own money, and channel federal funding from various sources, to support other ways for people who have been receiving welfare benefits to participate in vocational education. Separate state-funded programs, for example, are within the control of the state and need not comply with federal guidelines and restrictions. Maine's "Parents as Scholars" provides the equivalent of TANF benefits to 2,000 people who are not officially on the welfare caseload, allowing them to complete two- or four-year college programs (Cohen, 1998a).

School attendance options for teen parents. States establish school attendance requirements and can offer a range of education options, including GED and career development programs. Some programs also build in support services, such as parenting education and child care (Wood & Burghardt, 1997). Illinois' Teen Parent Services (TPS), for example, requires teen parents to maintain regular attendance in school, working toward a high school diploma or its equivalent, in order to receive TANF benefits. TPS also offers workshops on parenting and job search sessions for teen parents receiving welfare. YouthBuild in Minnesota provides basic skills instruction with career counseling and support services in an alternative school setting (National Governor's Association, 1998a).

Program Models

In this section we present a review of selected programmatic approaches that use vocational education services to prepare people receiving welfare benefits for successful employment. We selected programs with strong vocational education components, and excluded those geared toward immediate, nonselective job placement, so that this review would be useful in identifying promising practices that support welfare reform through workforce entry and career advancement.

Our early analysis of selected programs revealed much variation, which can be attributed to the flexibility states have to define work activities, and the flexibility programs have to offer

services that fit those categories. A pattern of approaches emerged, however, that can be differentiated by individuals' levels of participation in different categories of work activity. Therefore, we categorized approaches according to whether programs meet federal work requirements by offering vocational education (1) as a stand-alone work activity, (2) in combination with other work activities, or (3) after employment. Following are further descriptions of these programmatic approaches and program examples, as well as a summary of influential factors derived from the literature with implications for key variables that we investigated as part of this study.

Vocational Education as a "Stand-Alone" Work Activity

We describe in this section programs in which participants fulfill the federal work requirement entirely by participating in vocational education. Examples of education options that count as "stand-alone" work include some postsecondary education programs housed in community colleges, some basic skills programs that are linked with vocational education, and programs that offer an array of education services that meet work activity requirements. Programs for teen parents also fall under this category as participants must stay in school, or in an equivalent educational program, in order to receive TANF benefits. For many of these teens, vocational education may form a part of their secondary programs.

Many of the programs described in the literature review were designed and are implemented by a number of different agencies and organizations in collaboration. Our Advisory Working Group suggested that we pay particular attention to such linkages in order to identify strategies for delivering effective services. Education organizations that work with welfare agencies to meet TANF requirements and collaborate with businesses to design training activities, according to advisors, are more likely to help participants succeed in the transition off of public assistance.

Postsecondary programs in community colleges. Community colleges have played, and continue to play, a strong role in state and local welfare-to-work efforts (American Association of Community Colleges, 1998). Many have adapted programs so that participants can engage in postsecondary education as a "stand alone" work activity, learning skills that lead to work within the 12-month time limit. Community colleges in Florida, Washington, and Oregon are among those that have worked closely with state agencies and local businesses to develop programs that comply with welfare requirements and lead to employment (Brown, Ganzglass, Golonka, Hyland, & Simon, 1998; Cohen, 1998b; Strawn, 1998b;). Mt. Hood

Community College, for example, worked with the Oregon Department of Human Resources and local businesses to develop training programs for electronics manufacturing and clerical work that can be completed in less than a year's time (Brown et al., 1998).

Some community colleges provide extra services that encourage people receiving welfare benefits to continue formal education after job placement. Programs may link training activities for welfare participants with the colleges' certificate and degree programs. The community college system in Massachusetts, for example, provides participants with skills assessment and goal setting activities linked to further education (Brown et al., 1998).

A variation on the use of postsecondary education as a stand-alone work activity is Maine's "Parents as Scholars." Rather than adapt community college programs to meet the 12-month time limit, Maine uses its own state funds to support individuals who are eligible for welfare benefits so that they can participate in postsecondary education. As noted in the previous section on state decisions, individuals who are supported with state money need not comply with TANF requirements and can therefore engage in education activities for more than 12 months. "Parents as Scholars" covers expenses for students who are enrolled in specific college programs considered likely to lead to employment (Cohen, 1998b; IWPR, 1998).

Programs that offer basic skills instruction and vocational education. In these programs, individuals receive basic skills instruction that will lead to higher paying employment or enable them to enter postsecondary education programs. The National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) recently recognized as exemplary programs that combine basic and vocational education as preparation for work, resulting in effective job placement (Murphy & Johnson, 1998). Some of these programs include the Brooklyn College Child Care Provider Program, which reportedly placed 88 percent of its participants in jobs, and the CAP Services Family Literacy Program, wherein a community college, a Private Industry Council, a school district, and a public assistance agency collaborate to prepare participants for work, with a reported placement rate of 78 percent. The South Bay GAIN Employability Center/Sweetwater Union High School District in San Diego provides basic skills instruction, GED preparation, and occupationally specific training tailored to meet the individual needs of participants who were not able to find work after one month of intensive job search (Murphy & Johnson, 1998).

Other programs that provide basic skills instruction to prepare individuals for work are Even Start programs that feature a vocational education component. Such programs emphasize

employment in addition to literacy, and are reported to improve participants' education levels, as well as levels of employment, according to a recent survey (Geitz, Ganse, & Swartz, 1998).

Programs that offer an array of education services. New York's Education for Gainful Employment (EDGE) exemplifies education as a primary component of welfare-to-work. The state's broad definitions for work activities address education, allowing EDGE to offer a wide range of options, as well as support services. The program provides basic education, GED preparation, job development, short-term vocational skills training, work readiness, and support services to address the diverse needs of people receiving welfare benefits. Schools, Bureaus of Cooperative Education Services, colleges, Adult Centers for Comprehensive Education and Support Services Centers, and community-based organizations work with labor and social service agencies to deliver services at the local level. EDGE is an interagency effort, with New York's State Education Agency in a leadership role. To facilitate collaboration, the state education agency established a Welfare Reform Work Group of individuals representing higher education, vocational and educational services for individuals with disabilities, regional and community services, workforce preparation and continuing education (New York State Education Department, 1997a; 1997b).

Programs for teen parents. As noted in a National Governors' Association issue brief (1998a), teen parents represent a relatively small proportion of the total number of people receiving welfare, yet need a wide variety of services. Programs such as Teen Parent Services (TPS) in Illinois help participants meet the TANF school attendance requirements by providing education and job interest assessment, as well as comprehensive case management and fiscal support for child care and transportation. TPS, administered by the Illinois Department of Human Services, contracts with a variety of other agencies, organizations, and educational institutions to provide services (National Governors' Association, 1998a).

Vocational Education Combined with other Work Activities

Participants in these programs fulfill work requirements by participating in vocational education in combination with unsubsidized or subsidized employment in order to stretch the 12 month time limit. Some are vocational education programs with work requirements, such as summer employment. Programs may also use federal work study funds to subsidize employment so that students can work while in school. Also reviewed in this section are job-training programs described in the literature as effective in placing participants in higher paying jobs. Job training programs tend to offer occupationally specific skills instruction and, if necessary, basic

skills instruction in order to enter a specific field. Others emphasize employment for women in non-traditional occupations.

Our Advisory Working Group noted the importance of employer involvement in vocational training combined with work. Advisors described the critical role of the employer in the design of job training to fit their hiring needs, and commitment to hiring program graduates. Some of the programs discussed here worked with employers in order to gear training toward specific and well-compensated employment, and to ensure that the training was relevant to the local labor market.

Vocational education with work requirements. Work requirements are one strategy for stretching the 12-month limit on vocational education. Wyoming, for example, specified in its state plan that postsecondary coursework toward a vocational education certificate counts as work and, rather than limiting participation to one year, the state requires participants to hold a job during summer breaks for at least 32 hours per week over a 10-week period. Individual caseworkers decide whether or not coursework can be categorized as "job skills training directly related to employment." (Schmidt, 1998, in IWPR, 1998).

Federal Work-Study. The Secretaries of Health and Human Services and Education encouraged states to use Federal Work-Study funds as a way to combine education with work activities so that students receiving welfare benefits can stay in school (Cohen, 1998a). California, a state that provides funds to community colleges for a range of welfare-to-work activities, does this by earmarking up to $34 million for work-study positions for people receiving welfare benefits. Philadelphia is reportedly using part of a Department of Labor welfare-to-work grant to fund work study positions for 400 teen parents who graduate from high school and enroll in the Community College of Philadelphia (Johnson & Kaggwa, 1998).

Job-training programs. The literature on effective job training describes several programs geared toward specific occupations that fall into the category of vocational education combined with work. Such programs emphasize instruction specific to a particular occupation that is well-compensated and is of the participant's choosing. In addition to instruction, these programs may offer placement services and on-the-job training. Project Quest in San Antonio, for example, offers job preparation in specific, higher-paying occupations in which there is a hiring need. The program is supported by municipal, state, and federal funds, to cover participants' tuition, books, child care, and transportation. Graduates reportedly earn an average of $8 an hour, with benefits (Osterman & Lautsch, 1996, in IWPR, 1997).

Graduates of the Center for Employment Training (CET) program also successfully find and retain higher paying jobs because, according to evaluators, they receive specific job training rather than instruction in general "employability" areas, such as motivation and decision making. Other key features of this widespread program, which is administered in San Jose, California, are response to employer needs and provision of basic skills instruction in a work-based context. The program also offers counseling and other support services (Cohen, 1998a; Gueron & Pauly, 1991). Baltimore Options is another program that prepares and places participants in specific occupations, based upon assessment and participant choice (Friedlander & Burtless, 1995, in IWPR, 1997).

Education for nontraditional employment. Some programs geared toward specific occupations prepare women for nontraditional work, in order to increase their earning potential. For example, Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW) designed the Nontraditional Employment Training project to help women receiving welfare benefits in Washington, DC, find higher paying jobs. Although the programs are short term (about 13 weeks in duration) they teach both job-specific and basic skills in the context of work such as electronics, construction, and other traditionally male occupations. Eighty percent of participants were reportedly placed in jobs with starting wages of about $8.50 an hour (Watkins, 1997, in IWPR, 1997). NEW Choices for Women, created by Goodwill Industries, offers a similar program in Atlanta. Almost all (118 of 145) enrollees graduated, and 89 percent were placed in construction work, earning an average of $7.92 an hour in 1997 (Cohen, 1998a; Goodwill Industries, 1997 in IWPR, 1997).

Vocational Education After Employment

While programs described in the previous sections emphasize engagement in education services prior to employment, and job training and education with a work component, the following selections cover training programs that take place after an individual is hired. Such programs are characterized by close employer involvement and postemployment support. The literature described both public agency/private industry partnerships and community college-based programs partnering with the business community. The Advisory Working Group stressed the relevance of post-employment education to job retention, and noted that many people receiving welfare are not in a position to postpone earning wages until after job training.

Public agency/private industry partnerships. The Hospitality On-Site Training (HOST) program in Columbus, Ohio, is a partnership between employers and human service agencies. Business organizations, vocational schools, and human services agencies collaborated

to develop HOST. The program offers nine months of work and study including basic education in the context of on-the-job training and skill building for the hospitality industry (Brown et al., 1998; Cohen, 1998a). In a similar partnership, the state of Virginia worked with the Independent Electrical Contractors to design a program that helps newly employed people who have been receiving welfare benefits take advantage of apprenticeship opportunities that lead to higher wages (Brown et al., 1998).

Community college-business partnerships. The Massachusetts Community College system worked with employers to identify understaffed occupations (such as child care, home health, computer operation, customer service, and manufacturing) and then secured agreements with employers to hire graduates of programs that prepare participants for these jobs. The community college-based programs provide both academics and job-specific skill building, as well as employment services and weekly post-training contact with employers for at least 30 days. Training typically includes 10 weeks to five months of instruction and internship, and targets people who are in their last two years of welfare. While enrolled in the program, participants continue to receive welfare benefits such as child care, health care, and transportation (Brown et al., 1998).

Other examples of community college partnerships with local businesses include "Minnesota Pathways" and Oakland Community College in Pontiac, Michigan. Minnesota funded six education institution-employer partnerships to define career steps and the training that would move new employees to the next step on a career ladder. In Pontiac, Michigan, the local community college collaborated with employers to design post-employment training for newly hired welfare participants in high technology fields, using state workforce development funds. The 15-20 week customized training programs have reportedly helped participants increase earnings, move to higher-paying positions, and in some cases return to school (Brown et al., 1998).

Implications of the Literature

The literature review offered a number of important implications concerning selection of the case study sites and the information to be collected during the visits.

Site Selection

The 12 sites selected for this study illustrated each of the three models described above. They also reflected variability in terms of geographic region, host institution, characteristics of

targeted participants, major program activities, and the type of employment for which participants were trained. We selected programs housed in states that varied in their definitions of "vocational training," and in their approaches to targeting services and combining work and vocational education. We also included programs housed in community colleges that were involved in welfare-to-work efforts.

The Case Studies

RTI's conceptual framework for the study included five broad categories of variables related to:

- ***The program's context,*** such as state and local policies, target population, community characteristics, and labor market;
- ***The program's organizational arrangements,*** including linkages between and among its host institution, collaborating agencies, and employers;
- ***Program participants and the services they receive*** (including educational, support, and postemployment services);
- ***Resources,*** both financial and nonfinancial, that support the program; and
- ***Participant outcomes.***

Within each of these categories, the literature review helped to determine what information we should collect during the case studies.

Program context. Our preliminary review of the literature showed that state and local policy decisions can facilitate the use of vocational education for people receiving welfare benefits under PRWORA. According to the literature, states can create their own definitions for "vocational training," but programs must stay within the parameters of federal guidelines. Vocational education is limited by federal guidelines both in terms of the number of individuals who can engage in vocational education and the length of time (12 months) in which they can participate. Various research groups, including CLASP, are in the process of surveying states about their definitions of "work activity" and how those policies influence access to education for people receiving welfare benefits. In the meantime, the extent to which states provide participants with education services is not clearly documented, in part because service options continue to change and also because welfare reform, at least at the outset, prioritized "work first" over training and education (L. Plimpton, personal communication, October 20, 1998).

States also decide how they will identify and serve teen parents. A state's approach to tracking and enforcing mandatory school attendance and living arrangements may influence the

education options available to this population. According to Wood & Burghardt (1997) a variety of formal and informal interagency relationships have emerged as a strategy for states that wish to provide teen parents with comprehensive services.

In light of these issues, we decided to gather policy information from states housing case study programs. We were particularly interested in determining in what ways and to what extent states were exercising decision-making opportunities to enhance the education components of their welfare programs. To that end, we examined each state's general approach to welfare reform, their definitions of vocational training and other work activities, their conditions for participation in work-related training and education activities, and strategies they used to increase access to vocational education.

Our review of the literature also showed that while states can set policies defining work activity, program-level decisions, local policies, and community characteristics influence participant access to vocational education as well. Among these influences are the local labor market and the extent to which programs work with employers to develop training opportunities in response to hiring needs. Therefore, we also investigated local contextual variables as part of our case study research.

Organizational structure variables. Our preliminary review of the literature yielded much variation at the state and local levels in terms of interagency relationships and interorganizational partnerships. We found the involvement of multiple organizations to be driven, to some extent, by the state and local policy decisions described above. A number of states, for example, have defined vocational training to include postsecondary education, community colleges have adapted "traditional" semester-driven programs so that they met TANF work requirement timelines, and states have linked postsecondary education as a work activity with employment. In order to examine such strategies, we targeted some case study sites in states that had expanded their work activity definitions and were finding ways to extend the 12-month time limit on "vocational training."

With the exception of a program such as New York's EDGE, which is clearly linked with the state's education agency and also involves vocational rehabilitation, the various roles and relationships among human services agencies at the state and local levels are not easily identifiable in the literature. We therefore examined the roles and responsibilities of state and local education, labor, social services, vocational rehabilitation, and other agencies in welfare-to-work, as well as mechanisms for facilitating collaboration between the agencies. We expected

structural and other variables to be in the midst of change during this study, as programs continued to evolve and implement new policies that promoted collaboration, such as the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), described below in the section on "resource variables."

In addition to public organizations and agencies that comprise the structure of a program, businesses and private industry can also play a key role in vocational training, according to the literature and our Advisory Working Group. Our advisors recommended that employer involvement in training and education be considered as part of this inquiry, as well as linkages between employers and agencies that facilitate job retention for participants as they make the transition off of welfare.

In the area of organizational structure, we endeavored to determine case study sites' participating organizations, arrangements among and between organizations, and mechanisms for facilitating collaboration to improve access to vocational education.

Services provided by local programs. In this preliminary review of materials we found an array of program services influenced by state and local policies, available resources, and organizational structure. Services ranged from vocational education in postsecondary institutions, to basic instruction in a classroom setting, to job training in the context of work. We also found that some programs provided support services, such as child care and transportation as well as post-employment services.

Of particular interest to our research is whether various service options are geared toward specific populations for maximum benefit in terms of successful job placement and retention. Although we found little definitive information about targeting vocational education resources to specific populations, there was evidence that some programs tailored services to meet individual needs. Some, for example, help participants develop a plan based on their individual needs and interests. One such program, Illinois' program for teen parents, based the plan on an assessment of educational needs and career potential (Wood & Burghardt, 1997). Baltimore Options also helped participants find better paying jobs through assessment and participant choice in activities (Friedlander & Burtless, 1995, in IWPR, 1997). Other programs, such as the NIFL-recognized and Even Start programs, combine basic skills instruction with job training specifically for participants who have low basic skills. Some of the those programs also selected participants for vocational training based on demonstrated difficulty finding a job, or because they were otherwise considered to be "difficult to employ." Targeting resources to selected participants was listed as a success factor in effective welfare-to-work efforts, according to Manpower

Demonstration Research Corporation. Successful programs deferred participants who were considered least likely to benefit from the program (Hamilton, Brock, Farrell, Friedlander, & Harknett, 1997; Scrivener, Hamilton, Farrell, Friedman, Friedlander, Mitchell, Nudelman, & Schwartz, 1998). However, there is little definitive research that describes whether specific combinations of services yield better outcomes for specific participant groups or programs. We explored the issues of individualizing services and targeting resources as part of our case study research.

Programs that targeted specific occupations are particularly promising for job placement and retention. Some programs partnered with other organizations and agencies to combine basic education with job-specific skill building. The occupationally specific programs tended to provide basic skills instruction in the context of work and involve employers so that training met hiring needs in higher-paying fields. Some offered support services, such as child care and transportation, and post-employment services such as mentoring. These features are of particular interest to this study, given our emphasis on vocational education as a strategy for preparing and placing welfare participants in occupations with career potential. Our Advisory Working Group voiced strong interest in our study of post-employment service influences on job retention. In order to learn more about program options for participants, we examined case study programs' array of services, including post-employment, agencies and organizations providing those services, and how they were individualized to the specific needs of program participants.

Resources. In response to our research questions, we described both financial and nonfinancial support for vocational education programs that serve people receiving welfare benefits. Resource variables that emerged from our preliminary analysis of the literature and from our Advisory Working Group included sources of program funding, the contributions of participating agencies and other organizations, and staffing support needed for the array of services programs deliver.

We expected program funding sources, including contributions from various sectors, to fluctuate during the time of this study, given the recent passage of WIA. The legislation's blending of 60 different job training resources -- not including vocational education funding -- into three funding streams is meant to give states more flexibility in their use of federal funds. Local Workforce Investment Boards, with representation from school boards and community colleges, will replace Private Industry Councils to oversee the implementation of WIA at the local level (American Association of Community Colleges, 1998).

Federal resources also contribute to education for welfare reform through "one-stop career centers" and other welfare-to-work programs. The "one-stops" house multiple agencies involved in training, education, and employment together in order to coordinate services. The Department of Labor's welfare-to-work programs target services to people receiving welfare benefits who were defined as "hard to employ" because of multiple barriers to employment, including low levels of skill and education (National Alliance of Business, 1998; National Governors Association, 1998b; US Department of Labor, 1998).

Use of state and private dollars was also of interest to the study. State funds enabled programs to offer education services that are unrestricted by the PRWORA work requirements. Maine has taken advantage of this option, but it is not known in what ways and to what extent other states use their own money for people who are eligible for welfare benefits. Employer resources that contribute to training and education are not well documented. Businesses may provide funding, internships, and post-employment services in programs such as HOST and New Choices.

New staff positions and broadened roles for existing staff have evolved in programs that help participants transition off of public assistance. According to the literature and our Advisory Working Group, staff must develop strong relationships across agencies and with employers in order to provide effective services and job placement. Staff act as "case managers," "service coordinators," or "intermediaries," according to our advisors, to match services from various agencies to meet client needs. Personnel in these roles may increase client access to support services that are available in the community, such as child care, transportation, and treatment for mental health and substance abuse problems.

In sum, we examined a number of financial and nonfinancial resource variables in case study programs, to include federal, state, and private funds and mechanisms for combining them. We also collected information about staffing roles that contribute to services provided to people receiving welfare benefits.

Outcomes. Our Advisory Working Group recommended that we collect specific information about outcomes that can be attributed to the programs we study. In the literature, outcomes are often reported in terms of percentage of participants who find employment and the rate of pay they achieve. We asked case study informants to provide available data on placement rate, wages, and job retention. In addition, we inquired as to educational outcomes, such as

attainment of skills and certification, and outcomes related to public assistance, such as reduced dependence or departure from TANF.

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Appendix C
Supplemental Exhibits

Exhibit C-1. Agency and Employer Roles

Program	Host Institution		TANF Agency Role	Collaborating Agencies		Employer Role
	Type	Role		Types	Roles	
Advanced Technology Program (Michigan)	Community college	Program management, assessment, curriculum development, customized training, case management, counseling, support services	Eligibility determination, program referrals. (Community college is responsible for case managment.)	Workforce Development Boards, transit authority, Child Care Coordinating committee, JOBS Commission, transitional housing provider, employers	Serve on task force, provide direct services	Task force members, curriculum development, guest speakers, classroom volunteers, internships, placement, mentoring, postemployment services
Center for Employment Training (North Carolina)	National nonprofit	Assessment, counseling, employment preparation, referrals, placement, follow-up, labor market information, education and training services, policy and procedures manual for local staff, financial support	Eligibility determination, payment of benefits, case management referrals, serve on advisory board	Workforce Development Boards, Chambers of Commerce, temporary job placement agencies, technical colleges, universities	Serve on advisory boards, guest speakers, direct services, program referrals, curriculum development	Task force members, curriculum development, guest speakers, classroom volunteers, internships, placement, mentoring, postemployment services
Columbus County Joblink Career Center (North Carolina)	Community college operating a one-stop career center	Assessment, counseling, employment preparation, referrals, placement, follow-up, labor market information, education and training services	Eligibility determination, payment of benefits, case management, program referrals	One-stop partner agencies	Serve on steering committee, provide direct services	Steering committee members
Hospitality On-Site Training (Ohio)	Hospitality professional organization and local vocational education agency	Job placement, training, and support	Eligibility determination, payment of benefits, case management, program referrals	Local TANF agency	Eligibility determination, case management, assessment, tuition reimbursement, program referrals	Employment, training sites, work site liaisons

Exhibit C-1. Continued

Program	Host Institution		TANF Agency Role	Collaborating Agencies		Employer Role
	Type	Role		Types	Roles	
NEW Choices (Georgia)	Goodwill Industries (community-based organization)	Recruitment, assessment, case management, education and training services, support services through other community organizations	Eligibility determination, payment of benefits, case management, program referrals	Trade association	Postemployment support	Guest speakers, equipment, employment information and opportunities, curriculum development
Parents as Scholars (Maine)	State TANF agency	Eligibility determination, payment of benefits, case management, referrals	Host agency	Technical colleges and universities	Serve on program advisory committee, provide instruction and support services	Not Applicable
Regional Employment Network (New York)	ACCESS Center*	Coordination, development of shared information system, case management, assessment, referrals, education and training services, support services	Eligibility determination, payment of benefits, case management. (No direct referrals to education and training.)	12 employment and training agencies	Case management, assessment, referrals, education and training services, support services	Employment opportunities, mentoring
Short-Term Job Training Programs (Florida)	Community college	Education and training services	Eligibility determination, payment of benefits, case management, program referrals	Workforce Development Board, service providers, Jobs and Benefits Offices	Recruitment, assessment, referrals, job placement	Jobs, curriculum development, facilities
St. Louis Works (Missouri)	Labor union	Recruitment, assessment, orientation, tutoring	None	Labor unions, employers, banks, local government, community-based organizations	Provide overall direction through representation on Board, financial support	Representation on board, financial support, apprenticeship opportunities
Steps to Success (Oregon)	Community college	Education and training services, job placement	Eligibility determination, payment of benefits, case management, program referrals	Workforce development board, one-stop partners	Assessment, case management, placement, support services, referrals	Employment opportunities

Exhibit C-1. Continued

Program	Host Institution		TANF Agency Role	Collaborating Agencies		Employer Role
	Type	Role		Types	Roles	
Teen Parent Services (Illinois)	State TANF agency	Statewide administration, case management, counseling, referrals	Host agency	Local social service and community service agencies (under contract), community colleges	Assessment, counseling, support services, education and training services	Attend job fairs
Workforce Development Programs (Texas)	Community college	Assessment, education and training services	Eligibility determination, payment of benefits, case management, program referrals	Workforce development board	Assessment, tuition reimbursement, referrals	Curriculum development

*New York's ACCESS Centers were established by the state's Departments of Education, Labor, and Social Services to provide co

Exhibit C-2. Elements of Program Design

Program	Primary Emphasis	Employment Field	Vocational Education and Training Services	Other Key Services	Instructional Environment
Advanced Technology Program (Michigan)	Vocational training	COBOL programmers and Administrative Support Team Members	Curriculum combines 5-10 weeks of "soft skills," 10-15 weeks of job training, and one-month internship Curriculum based on Work Keys job task analysis	Employers provide mentoring and additional training College staff member responsible for case management College counselor conducts regular performance reviews	Community college
Center for Employment Training (North Carolina)	Vocational training, basic skills, life skills	Automated Office Skills, Shipping and Receiving Clerks/Handlers, Electronics Technology, and Medical Insurance Billing	Program lasts approximately 7 months Curriculum changes in response to labor market forecasts	Job readiness Referrals for remedial education Vocational English instruction Job placement Postemployment follow-up	Classroom and simulated workplace
Columbus County Joblink Career Center (North Carolina)	Vocational training and support services	Banking, clerical, and bookkeeping	Short-term vocational training (length varies by course) Clients may transition to articulated sequences of vocational courses and two-year associate degree programs	Career and personal assessment and related counseling Employment readiness and preparation training Literacy assessment and referrals Job placement and follow-up Employment resource center	Community college and one-stop career center
Hospitality On-Site Training (Ohio)	On-the-job training with life-skills support	Variety of positions in the hospitality industry	Nine-month program On-the-job training as a paid employee Classroom training to develop and reinforce work readiness skills	Dayton classes at one-stop center facilitate access to variety of services Referrals to other agencies for academic and support services	On-the-job hospitality settings; classrooms in a one-stop career center and a hotel

Exhibit C-2. Continued

Program	Primary Emphasis	Employment Field	Vocational Education and Training Services	Other Key Services	Instructional Environment
NEW Choices (Georgia)	Vocational training	Nontraditional careers in construction	Eleven weeks of preparation for nontraditional careers in construction Vocational skills training, physical conditioning, trades math, "Women in the Trades," job readiness, and survival skills for women	Case management Referrals for support services Job placement Postemployment support from job developer and tradeswomen's network	Warehouse setting fitted with work stations, classroom
Parents as Scholars (Maine)	Support for two- and four-year degree completion	Must pursue a "marketable" degree	Participants enroll in variety of programs at state universities and technical colleges	Benefits equivalent to TANF from state maintenance-of-effort funds	Universities and technical colleges
Regional Employment Network (New York)	Information system for referral; emphasis on postemployment services	Varies by provider; see site visit report in Part 2 (Exhibit 3).	Varies by provider; see site visit report in Part 2 (Exhibit 3) Emphasis on postemployment services.	Shared information system lets client enter system at any point Other programs co-located at ACCESS Center	Varies by provider agency
Short-Term Job Training Programs (Florida)	Short-term job skill training	Maintenance, nail care, food preparation, office support, and patient care	Four- to 32-week programs Hands-on, competency-based curriculum Life skills and job readiness integrated into program	Work experience placements Access to college career development office and job fairs Monthly support group	Community college
St. Louis Works (Missouri)	On-the-job training as part of a union apprenticeship program	Building trades, primarily carpentry	Brief orientation to the building trades Tutoring to prepare for entry-level math tests Three to five years of on-the-job and related training through registered apprenticeships	Pilot job-readiness program through community college Assistance with transportation and referrals for support services	On-the-job training, unions' construction training school
Steps to Success (Oregon)	Vocational training and support	Office occupations	One- to six-week vocational courses, depending upon employment plan General employment preparation Courses to improve computer skills and prepare for clerical positions	Adult basic education and GED preparation Job club Work experience Career and life planning	Community-based centers associated with a community college

Exhibit C-2. Continued

Program	Primary Emphasis	Employment Field	Vocational Education and Training Services	Other Key Services	Instructional Environment
Teen Parent Services (Illinois)	Intensive case management and service coordination	N/A (emphasis on high school or GED completion)	Clients eligible until they complete high school or GED Educational assessment and services with emphasis on high school or GED completion	Intensive case management Individualized counseling Referrals and follow-up for support services Workshops on topics of interest Employment readiness activities	Community-based organizations
Workforce Development Programs (Texas)	Vocational training and support; English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction	Computer operation, basic adult care, manufacturing	Four- to six-month programs Job training combined with basic skills Bilingual job skills training in computers, plastics, electricity, basic adult care, and child care	College and GED preparation in Spanish and English Tutoring and counseling	Community-based centers associated with a community college

Case Studies

Advanced Technology Program
Oakland Community College
Pontiac, Michigan

Overview

Oakland Community College's (OCC's) Advanced Technology Program (ATP) prepares welfare recipients who have a high school diploma or GED for high-paying jobs, including careers in robotics technology and computer systems administration. Working with employers that are willing to hire at least 10 graduates for jobs that have starting salaries of $20,000 or more, as well as fringe benefits and opportunities for advancement, ATP develops curricula that include five weeks of training on "soft" skills, 10 to 15 weeks of customized job training, and a paid one-month internship. At OCC, the program has enrolled 123 students since its inception in 1995, with more than 90 percent placed in the positions for which they were trained.

Largely the idea of State Representative Hubert Price, Jr., ATP is supported entirely by federal TANF funds. Initially piloted and implemented at OCC's Pontiac campus, the program has since been replicated at other locations in Oakland County and at other community colleges in the state. To support statewide replication, state legislators established the Enhanced Technical Vocational Training Fund, to which they allocated $4 million in 1999.

ATP, which earned a Workforce Development Award from the American Association of Community Colleges and the U.S. Department of Labor, is guided by a task force that includes representatives of the college, the welfare agency (the "Family Independence Agency," or FIA), the local transit authority, the local Workforce Development Board (or WDB),[1] the state's Child Care Coordinating Committee, the Michigan Jobs Commission, a local transitional housing agency, and participating employers. ATP's director spends about half of her time on the program; additional personnel who devote one-third or more of their time include a coordinator, who is responsible for curriculum development, scheduling, and working with corporate sponsors; a placement specialist, who handles case management; and an assessment coordinator, who is a licensed counselor.

[1] Michigan's local workforce boards are known as Workforce Development, rather than Workforce Investment, Boards.

Context

State

According to the state administrator we interviewed, Michigan's welfare reform legislation, enacted a year before PRWORA was passed, is very similar to the federal legislation. The state's 12 allowable work activities correspond almost exactly to those outlined by PRWORA, although Michigan does specify that TANF clients may participate in unsubsidized employment for no longer than four weeks. Because Michigan's system for delivering welfare-to-work services is decentralized, vocational education programs are more likely to be involved at the local, rather than statewide, level.

Michigan has chosen not to take advantage of the PRWORA provision that allows 20 percent of TANF clients to participate in vocational education and training. Instead, it supports only post-employment training. It does, however, allow individuals who are enrolled in training programs to count five of the hours they spend in training toward the work requirement (which was 25 hours a week at the time of our visit). For those who choose to participate in post-employment training, the state will pay for books, supplies, equipment, transportation, and day care for up to 12 months.

Although few TANF clients currently enroll in post-employment training, state officials would like to encourage more to do so. According to a representative of the Oakland County FIA, the state's welfare-to-work program has evolved from a total "work-first" philosophy, as success in placing recipients in employment has allowed administrators to think about how to improve the program. ATP administrators hope that, in the near future, they will be able to persuade state officials to waive the work requirement for individuals participating in their and other similar program(s).

During the program's first year (1995), students did not have to work while attending class, since work requirements were not yet in effect. Since 1996, however, participants have also been required to work (at the time of our visit, for 25 hours a week, five of which could be in training). Administrators speculated that, when the work requirement increased to 30 hours (in July 1999), they might have to spread instruction over more weeks or adopt an apprenticeship model, especially as they enrolled more hard-to-serve clients.

All of Michigan's welfare-to-work funds flow to local WDBs. The WDBs work with the state's one-stops; state officials reported that Michigan would have 100 centers by July 1, 1999. In the first year of ATP implementation, both of the county's WDBs (which have since been

consolidated into one) and the college were involved in case management. They found, however, that clients needed to communicate with only one organization, and would sometimes pit one agency against the other. Consequently, in the program's second year, college administrators asked to assume all case management functions for ATP clients.

According to the ATP's director, the linkage between the state's WDBs and its welfare agency has helped facilitate the success of her program. Unlike welfare agencies in some other states, FIA is responsible only for determining eligibility and handling paperwork. To place clients in employment or training, it contracts with "Work First" providers through the Michigan Jobs Commission.[2] While in other states the workforce board may have trouble getting the names of TANF clients, Oakland County conducts a joint orientation when a case opens, involving both FIA and Work First providers.

To form the Jobs Commission, the state's governor consolidated the Departments of Commerce, Labor, and Economic Development, and added other agencies involved in workforce development. The Commission, which serves business and industry, is designed to attract and retain companies, as well as to train employees. A Commission account representative helped identify several business partners that have been involved in ATP, as well as others that have expressed interest in participating in the future.

For families that exceed the 60-month limit for benefits from federal funds, Michigan will provide assistance from its own funds for an unspecified length of time. The state exempts mothers with children under the age of three from work participation requirements, and has an income disregard of $200 a month. Under these policies, Michigan's caseload dropped by 44 percent during the first two years after passage of PRWORA (Administration for Children and Families, 1999).

Local

OCC serves Oakland County (with a population of about one million) which, according the program director, is the third wealthiest area in the country. Known as "Automation Alley," the county is a high-tech area similar to Silicon Valley in California. Employers are "begging for

[2] The Jobs Commission was reorganized on April 4, 1999 (about three weeks before our visit), into the Michigan Economic Development Corporation and The Department of Career Development. Consequently, it was too early for any impact of reorganization to be apparent at the local level, and most respondents still referred to the Jobs Commission.

employees": competition for workers is such that jobs at "fast food" restaurants may pay $7-$9 an hour. The availability of high-tech, high-paying jobs, according to the program director, is another reason for ATP's success.

In the late 1980s, between 10,000 and 12,000 individuals in the county received welfare benefits; now, the number of cases has declined to 3,700. Many of the remaining individuals, according to a representative of FIA, are undereducated, lack job skills, have substance abuse problems, or have mental or physical health problems.

Organizational Structure

Participating agencies and organizations

The ATP was largely the idea of State Representative Hubert Price, Jr. As a former corporate "head hunter," Price knew that there was a good market for robotics technicians, and that the job did not require a two- or four-year degree. He believed that, because many of the individuals receiving TANF payments had high school diplomas, they were good candidates for positions in this field. As a former Oakland County Commissioner, Price also knew what agencies and individuals would have to be involved to create the necessary training program. In 1995, through personal contacts, he assembled a task force that included representatives of:

- OCC;
- FIA;
- The local transit authority, known as SMART;
- The local WDBs;
- Michigan's Child Care Coordinating Committee, a nonprofit group that provides child care training and referrals to service providers;
- The Michigan Jobs Commission;
- Pontiac Area Transitional Housing (PATH) women's shelter; and
- Local employers, including —
  - Electronic Data Systems (EDS), an information technology company;
  - Xerox Corporation; and
  - Deco, a machine tool technology company.

The group includes both top-level executives and "front-line" staff. One respondent suggested that this structure was critical for success, especially since task force meetings may provide the only opportunity that staff members have to interact with "higher-ups."

During the program's first year, the task force met on a weekly basis. The second year, it convened once a month; the third, every other month. Now that the program is established, the group operates primarily through subcommittees, with the entire body assembling only to address policy issues or problems. Between meetings, however, all members interact regularly through telephone calls.

A number of respondents cited this task force as a primary reason for the success of the ATP. By bringing together all relevant agencies, the group has facilitated collaboration. Still, the program director noted, it took time to build strong relationships among the agencies involved: "Trust doesn't happen overnight." The agencies really began working well together in the program's second year, when task force members started to see evidence of the program's success.

It is important, the director noted, to be sure that each agency receives credit for its contribution and to involve all parties in positive events. For example, "everyone who has anything to do with success" attends program graduation ceremonies: a ceremony for 20 students may be attended by 250 people, including high-level executives. Front-line staff also need rewards, since "when you lose one" (i.e., when a program participant does not succeed), it can be heartbreaking. Staff members try to share success stories with each other, whether they come in the form of a phone call from a former student, a report that someone got a good job, or an award like the one from AACC.

Services

Participant characteristics

As of April 1999, a total of 148 individuals had enrolled in the ATP at OCC. Nearly all of these students were female; 60 percent were African American; and about 30 percent were White. The average age was 30. Collectively, the students had 337 children (an average of just over two each). About 60 percent of those who enrolled had some experience in postsecondary education (perhaps through JTPA or other programs), although none had a two- or four-year degree. Twenty percent of participants were also clients of the PATH women's shelter.

With regular TANF funds for post-employment training (or "PET" funds), the college offers training programs for individuals who do not have high school diplomas, preparing them for less technical careers (e.g., chefs and home day care providers). ATP, however, targets TANF clients who have high school diplomas or GEDs, and who score at the 10th grade level or

higher in reading on the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE). Employers may impose additional requirements in customized training programs; e.g., EDS requires drug testing and checks for criminal records.

According to the program director, recruitment is a major problem for ATP. Because students must work 20 hours a week in addition to attending classes for 35 hours a week, many TANF clients are unable or unwilling to participate. The college also experienced some difficulty in recruiting women for the nontraditional field of machine tool technology.

The program is closely involved with the county's 11 Work First providers, which include two of its one-stop career centers. However, ATP has experienced some difficulties in getting referrals from Work First providers, despite the fact that counselors score better on performance standards when they place their clients in high-paying jobs. Through personal tours and letters, administrators have been able to improve communication with many caseworkers. In the early stages of ATP implementation, FIA reassigned all program participants to the same caseworker, so that only one had to become familiar with the program's requirements. One respondent suggested, however, that this procedure may not be so critical once the program is established.

ATP relies on a variety of methods to recruit participants, including posters, mailings, press releases, and word of mouth. The program also sends a representative to each of the six orientation sessions that Work First providers hold each week. An FIA representative noted, however, that orientation may not be the best time for recruiting, since clients have a great deal of information to absorb during that process. Consequently, caseworkers also provide information about the program at a later time. Nevertheless, he explained, recruiting can be difficult because many clients — especially those who have received welfare benefits for an extended period of time — have low self-esteem and aspirations. Some do respond to the idea that their participation in the program, and subsequent success in the world of work, will have a positive effect on their children.

Description of services

Most of the individuals who express interest in the ATP have already completed job search activities (though some may have already had jobs when they became TANF clients). During a group orientation session that lasts for about an hour, prospective participants learn about the application process, testing procedures, and the time commitment that the program will

require. They also meet with the program's caseworker to discuss their financial situations and needs for support services. (This information is not used in eligibility decisions.)

To assess applicants, ATP's counselor uses:

- TABE reading and math tests. Program staff look for applicants who score at the 10th grade level or higher in reading, although they have accepted a few participants with 9th grade reading skills. Applicants who score below the 10th grade level can retest, or use the self-guided computer programs that some Work First career centers offer to improve their skills.
- Selected subscales of the Differential Aptitude Test Level 2 Form C — which may include Verbal Reasoning, Spelling, Language Usage, or Abstract Reasoning — depending upon the program in which the individual is interested.

The program is fairly strict about requiring 10th grade reading skills: as the director noted, "We need (students) to be able to benefit from what we have to offer." However, it does not set specific cutoffs for scores on other tests. The ATP's counselor uses assessment data to identify participants' strengths and weaknesses (e.g., an individual may have good reading skills but need to work on spelling) and explains how they will apply those skills at work. She advises students that they should be prepared to spend extra time with their instructor, or get tutoring help through the college's individualized instruction center, when the class covers areas in which they are weak.

As the final step in the application process, prospective students participate in an interview with two staff members and an employer representative, with each applicant responding to the same questions. Like all of the company's prospective employees, applicants for EDS programs participate in "behavioral interviews" designed to identify individuals who have adequate life skills and a good attitude. "If you take people that are properly motivated, with the right attitude," an EDS representative explained, "you can train them to do anything." From a group of about 25 candidates, program staff and employer representatives choose up to 18 individuals to enroll in the program. Selected applicants begin class shortly thereafter, usually within a week.

Instructional program. Since its inception, ATP has offered 15- to 20-week programs that prepare participants for specific jobs, including careers in robotics technology and computer systems administration. At the time of our visit, it offered two "tracks," which trained students to work as:

- ***COBOL programmers at EDS***, or
- ***Administrative Support Team Members (ASTMs) at Kelly Services***. Through Kelly's contract with General Motors, ASTMs (who are permanent employees of Kelly Services) provide a variety of support services — including secretarial, document processing, and purchasing functions — at GM's Pontiac site.

Participants attend class from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. each week day, for a total of 35 hours a week. Administrators, who described the program as a kind of "boot camp," believe that it is important for students to adhere to the routine of the normal business day. Based on their experience in training dislocated workers who received unemployment benefits for only six months, they also knew that intense short-term training could be very effective when specific companies were involved. ATP's director pointed out that it was easier for students to commit to a short-term program: "Imagine trying to sell somebody on the idea that you are going to work harder than you have ever worked in your life." Participants—who experience many life events that "get them into trouble"—may be better able to succeed when the program becomes the focal point of their lives, and they can see its ending date on their calendars. The students we interviewed agreed that ATP was demanding: one remarked half-jokingly that participants should not ". . .even think about sleep." Nevertheless, highly motivated individuals found a way to meet requirements: administrators cited the example of one student who had just given birth to her fourth child a few days earlier and was living in transitional housing, but still doing well in the program.

The process of developing a customized training curriculum for each program "track" begins with a job task analysis. Two ATP staff members use Work Keys, in collaboration with up to six individuals currently performing the job for which participants will be trained, to develop a job task list. The job task list becomes the technical curriculum, while the Work Keys skill levels give administrators a sense of the "soft skills" required by the job.[3]

About one-third of the ATP curriculum focuses on "soft" skills, while the remainder is technical training. For the first five weeks, participants receive training on conflict resolution and problem solving, study Steven Covey's "Seven Habits of Highly Successful People," and learn how to use the Franklin Planner. "We knew. . . that soft skills came first," the program

[3] ATP has encouraged rural areas to implement its model by creating consortia in which specific types of small businesses (e.g., machine shops) jointly identify the skills that program participants should have and commit to hire graduates. This approach, however, has not yet been successfully implemented.

director explained. This portion of the program is "almost a standard package," although curriculum developers ask employers to identify any other soft skills that the curriculum should address; Xerox, for example, wanted to emphasize customer service, while Kelly was interested in telephone skills.

The students we interviewed commented on the importance of the soft skills they acquired during this portion of the program. Individual students reported that they were able to apply the team approaches they learned in the classroom to other situations, and that this component "taught us to put ourselves first" and imparted a sense of self-worth. They also found Steven Covey's "Seven Habits of Highly Successful People" helpful: one described it as a "life-altering experience."

Curriculum developers can usually identify courses in the regular college curriculum (e.g., keyboarding, computer literacy, and word processing) that provide most of the technical skills that participants need; they develop customized courses to address the remainder. Even in regular courses, however, ATP participants are grouped into a separate class. The college emphasizes competency-based instruction and assessment, and the students we interviewed appreciated their instructors' willingness to use nontraditional methods. One staff member pointed out, however, that students also need to be prepared to participate in more traditional classes such as those offered by EDS.

Curriculum developers look for ways to "bring the company into the classroom"; e.g., they encourage managers to visit classes as early as possible in the program. In the EDS track, company employees usually volunteer to spend between 25 and 50 hours in class, working side-by-side with students in the lab. For the Kelly track, ATP's curriculum developer works with the company to develop scenarios for classroom training; for example, students might discuss how they would handle repeated phone calls from someone that their manager wanted to avoid.

In most tracks, the final month of the program consists of an internship in which the student works three days a week and attends class on the remaining days. According to one employer representative, the internship is key to the success of ATP, since it "plugs the gap between class and work." One function of the internship is simply to help employees become comfortable with their new surroundings and routine. Although they also learn new job skills, as an EDS representative noted, the internship may not be a suitable time for some of the intensive training that his company offers. Individuals who intern at EDS are assured of a position with

the company; at Kelly, some may be placed at businesses other than the GM facility, which is considered the most desirable location.

Support services. ATP individualizes its program primarily in the area of support, rather than academic, services. Its three key staff members (the program coordinator, assessment coordinator, and placement specialist) meet several times each day to address case management issues. Work First provides funds for extensive support services—including transportation, clothing, car repairs up to a specified limit, eyeglasses, and dental care—and, because the college is responsible for case management, it can issue checks for these expenses quickly. Staff members realized, however, that there were some costs that Work First did not cover; for example, expenses for traffic tickets, divorce proceedings, and car repairs above the Work First limit. To cover these costs, ATP administrators used a donation from a local law firm to establish an emergency fund of $25,000. The fund gives employers a way (in addition to hiring welfare recipients) of supporting the program and allows administrators to make case-by-case decisions about what expenses to approve. Although there are no formal rules about how to use emergency funds, the program's director noted that the recipient "has to be someone we believe will succeed." Staff members encourage participants to discuss any issues that may prevent them from successfully completing the program. "Trust," one observed, "is a two-way street. If something will keep you from graduating and going to work, tell us."

The program's caseworker conducts a performance review with each participant every five weeks. Administrators initiated this process, based on feedback from EDS, in order to identify and address problems at an early stage. Using information provided by all program staff, as well as by the student herself, the caseworker reviews attendance and discusses the student's progress in attendance, dress (dress code calls for "business casual" Monday through Thursday and casual on Friday), attitude, group interaction, and teamwork. If there is a problem, the caseworker and student develop a Personal Plan of Action for Improvement (PPAI) to address it. The PPAI, a contract between the student and program staff, lists the problem, actions to be taken, and plans for reevaluation. It also specifies that failure to make satisfactory progress in addressing the problem ". . .can and will lead to termination from the ATP program."

The ATP has also worked to address students' transportation needs. As a member of the task force, the local transit authority (SMART) developed bus routes to accommodate the needs of program participants at the Pontiac campus. Although the college is on the regular bus route, students needed routes that would enable them to drop their children off at child care before

coming to class and pick them up afterward. SMART, however, does not operate throughout the county.[4] Although FIA funds can pay for automobile expenses such as insurance and mileage, transportation is still a problem for some participants. To address these problems, one employer representative is working to develop partnerships with used car dealers, parts suppliers, and banks that will provide TANF clients with reliable vehicles, reasonably priced parts, and competitive financing.

Other support services include a "shopping day," in which staff members escort participants to the mall and pay for new clothes, so that students do not have to wait for reimbursement through Work First. ATP has also participated in occasional events involving the faith community; e.g., a clothing drive.

Several of the program graduates we interviewed suggested that some students might benefit from receiving more information about the types of speech and dress that are appropriate for the workplace. (They acknowledged, however, that it would be difficult to provide this information in a tactful fashion.) One individual who had successfully completed the program remarked that she would like to speak to current participants so that they "could ask more personal questions." She also believed that, as a former student, she could help identify those who were likely to persist in the program, through their attitude and demeanor. She recalled that, as a participant, she had been angry with classmates who did not work hard. During the program, "We grew up. Some people are not ready to grow up."

Post-employment services. ATP attempts to offer its students a network of support, based on help from its caseworker, the bonds that students develop with their classmates, and guidance from work-site supervisors and mentors.

As it does for all of its new employees, EDS assigns ATP completers a mentor. It also provides front-line managers who will supervise program graduates with two hours of training to familiarize them with the ATP program, and asks them to devote a little extra attention to the employee during her first six to eight weeks on the job. The company asks supervisors to try to identify the cause of any problem that the individual encounters; e.g., some employees who depend on city buses to get to work were out for almost a week this past winter, when service was suspended due to heavy snow. Former welfare recipients, the EDS representative we

[4]Voters in each city determine whether they are willing to pay for the service, and buses generally transport people from less affluent areas to work in wealthier communities.

interviewed noted, are often intimidated when they begin working with others who have four-year degrees. Then, he explained:

They find that they know as much as their peers because of specialized training. They also have motivation that others don't seem to have. When they get their confidence and self-esteem restored and look at what they did, they know they can do other things.

EDS' "corporate culture" may make it particularly suitable as an employer of former welfare recipients. Because this company was involved in information technology before colleges and universities began offering computer science programs, employees can become top-level managers without having four-year degrees. For the first year, EDS employees rotate among a variety of positions while they develop a career plan. According to the individuals we interviewed, the company provides its employees with ". . .so much internal training that it is like going to school." Perhaps as a result, not many ATP completers working at EDS have returned to OCC for further training. The company is also supportive when employees encounter personal problems: both of the ATP completers we interviewed at ETS reported that they had been allowed to work flexible hours, or to work from home, when unusual personal circumstances required it. EDS's representative noted, however, that program completers had also been successful in the environments of other companies, such as Kelly Services.

Like all new employees, ATP interns who work for Kelly Services at GM participate in an orientation session. During their one-month internship, they are assigned to work with two different mentors, so that they can obtain a variety of information and perspectives. The company furnishes mentors with a "checklist" outlining specific topics to cover (e.g., telephone etiquette; scheduling and arranging meetings; using Word, PowerPoint, and Excel; operating printers, copiers, and FAX machines; making travel arrangements; prioritizing work assignments; and maintaining a positive attitude). At the end of a two-week period, each mentor completes a "Quality Check" form (shown in Exhibit 1). If problems arise, Kelly's on-site managers meet with the employee to document and address them. On-site managers also make brief presentations at staff meetings on topics such as attitude and customer service, and will assist employees in obtaining additional training in use of software such as Word, Excel, Powerpoint, and Access. GM offers a skills development center that contains video and audio materials on a variety of topics (e.g., technology, supervision); the company issues certificates to employees who complete a certain number of self-instructional modules.

Exhibit 1. Kelly Services OCC Intern Quality Check Form

Intern name

Mentor name

1. Does the intern possess the skills needed for successful completion of the required tasks (yes/no)? If no, please explain.
2. Have they adjusted well to the work environment (yes/no)? If no, please explain.
3. Do they demonstrate a positive attitude image (yes/no)? If no, please explain.
4. Does the intern exhibit a team-player mentality (yes/no)? If no, please explain.
5. Does the intern understand proper telephone etiquette and voice mail procedures (yes/no)? If no, please explain.
6. Is the intern capable of handling:

    1. Opening and distributing mail (yes/no)?
    2. Maintaining calendars and scheduling meetings (yes/no)?
    3. Making travel arrangements (yes/no)?
    4. Preparing expense reports (yes/no)?
    5. Setting up and maintaining files (yes/no)?
    6. Ordering/replenishing office supplies (yes/no)?

    If no, please explain.

7. Has the intern been introduced to the Blue Book Quick Reference Sheet?
8. Does the intern properly prioritize the assigned work (yes/no)? If no, please explain.
9. Does the intern have good follow up skills (yes/no)? If no, please explain.
10. Does the intern work well independently (yes/no)? If no, please explain.
11. Does the intern possess good spelling, grammar, punctuation, and proofreading skills (yes/no)? If no, please explain.
12. Does the intern know how to operate office machinery (yes/no)? If no, please explain.
13. Are there any additional training needs required at this time?
14. What are the intern's major strengths?
15. Are there any recommended areas of improvement?
16. Additional comments.

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Both ATP and Kelly representatives indicated that they had benefited from their collaboration. Because interns "float" from one position to another before being assigned to a permanent desk, they obtain a variety of experience. If, at the end of the one-month internship, a supervisor believes that a particular employee is not ready for a permanent assignment, that employee can continue in the floater pool for an additional month. The on-site supervisors provide employees with prompt feedback on their performance, and communicate closely with OCC staff so that the college can respond to any client concerns. Finally, the company can place employees who do not succeed in GM's fast-paced environment at other locations. (There have been a half-dozen such cases.)

Kelly benefits because it gets workers who have one month's experience and the flexibility to fill a variety of positions. According to top-level Kelly executives whom we interviewed, ATP participants—through the process of learning skills in the classroom, applying those skills at work, and then bringing questions based on work experience back to the classroom—become familiar with the concept of constant reskilling, and the idea that they must become "career managers" for themselves.

In hiring decisions, Kelly relies on the checklists and Quality Check forms that mentors complete, as well as pre- and post-employment scores on its own computerized Testing Assessment Program (TAP), which tests typing speed and knowledge of Word and Excel. The company has hired about 50 ATP completers, but has let about 10 or 15 go.

About 10 program completers employed by Kelly have returned to OCC for further training in either part-time or accelerated programs. According to the program director, most others say that they are so busy working and taking care of their children that they do not have time for further schooling. For those who do return, the college offers scholarships (from a fund named for Representative Price) that will pay their first semester's tuition. OCC established this scholarship with the $10,000 award it received from AACC and additional donations.

OCC personnel follow up with employees after they go to work, encouraging any who lose their jobs to contact the college for assistance, and to get back to work as quickly as possible. Staff members advise former students who are laid off that they should apply for unemployment benefits rather than welfare assistance. They also let participants know that, if they leave their first job, the college will assist them with one additional placement. At the college, former students can update their resumes, participate in Job Club activities, and mail or FAX applications.

Resources

ATP is supported entirely by federal TANF funds. For its first two years, the program was funded at $100,000 to $150,000. Just over $200,000 of the $4 million that the state allocates to its Enhanced Technical Vocational Training Fund goes to OCC through the local WDB. Other sources of support for training welfare recipients include: (1) $260,000 in regular TANF funds for post-employment training (PET); and (2) $200,00 from the recently created "Governor's Career Scholarship Program," derived from lottery revenues. This new program will pay for 50 percent of tuition, books, and fees for specific training programs. By supporting some individuals with Career Scholarship (as well as JTPA) funds, OCC has been able to double the number of participants in ATP.

OCC's Workforce Development Services is a self-supporting department, with programs for welfare recipients representing about one-third of its activities. It depends upon tuition-based reimbursement; e.g., the department receives $1,200 for the "soft skills" track, and $3,900 for EDS's COBOL track. In addition, administrators estimate that the college spends about $1,000 to $1,200 per year to provide support services to each participant. Thus, ATP's average cost per participant totals about $6,000.

In contrast, Work First's average cost per placement is only about $400. One respondent noted, however, that her impression was that many clients cycled through Work First programs four or five times. (Data on the number of returns to Work First, however, were not available at the time of our visit.)

OCC, in partnership with a credit union and the local housing authority, plans to establish Individual Development Accounts for a pilot group of participants, using money from its emergency fund. With matching funds from United Way, these accounts should enable five to seven individuals to become homeowners by next year.

Staff resources devoted to the program include (in addition to instructors) the time of:

- ***The Director of Workforce Development Services***, who spends 5 to 10 percent of her time on activities related to Work First.
- ***The program director***, who serves as liaison with the task force and supervises the ATP staff, devoting about half of her time to the program.
- ***A program coordinator***, who spends about one-third of her time on program activities. This individual, with assistance from an additional staff member, is responsible for curriculum development, hiring teachers, developing the program's schedule, and working with corporate sponsors.

- ***A placement specialist***, responsible for case management, who spends fulltime working with ATP students.
- ***An assessment coordinator***, also a licensed counselor, who devotes three-fourths time to the program.

Outcomes

Throughout the state, about 220 individuals have completed ATP tracks. Program administrators reported that these individuals, who previously received welfare payments of about $14,000 a year (in addition to Medicaid costs of about $3,500 for a family of three), now earn average salaries of $23,000 to $25,000, with benefits.

Using information from FIA, administrators monitor the welfare status of participants every six months. During the program's first year of operation, all welfare agency costs for participants dropped, except those for day care, which doubled. Estimated savings were about $150,000.

At OCC, 94 percent of the 123 individuals who had enrolled in ATP successfully completed the program. At the end of the program's first three years, 67 percent were still employed by the companies that sponsored their training programs. More than 80 percent of the 43 individuals that EDS hired were still with the company; the retention rate for Kelly Services, which hired a similar number of completers, was about 70 percent.

At EDS, the program's representative has been asked to develop a formal Return on Investment model. The company estimates that it costs $3,000-$5,000 to recruit a new employee, and that it spends from $4,000 to $8,000 on training during the employee's first year. Like all companies, EDS needs relatively inexpensive entry-level workers to offset the higher salaries it pays to experienced employees. According to ATP's contact at EDS, recruiting 10 new workers through ATP more than pays for the time that he devotes to program activities.

EDS reported that the ATP completers started work at an average annual salary of $21,500, and that program graduates had received wage increases that were twice the industry's average. At Kelly Services, participants began work at an average annual salary of $18,750, increasing by 25 percent to an average of $23,300 during their first 18 months on the job.

Implications

ATP's experience offers a number of lessons concerning the context in which welfare-to-work programs operate, their organizational structures, the services they provide, the resources they require, and the outcomes they produce, including the following:

- ***By assuming responsibility for case management***, employment and training agencies may be able to serve their clients more effectively. During ATP's first year, program staff determined that both participants and college personnel would benefit if clients had a single point of contact. Because the college's caseworker communicates closely with students and their instructors, she can recognize and respond to students' needs for support services promptly, and on an individualized basis.
- At the state level, ***organizational structures that link welfare agencies and Workforce Investment Boards*** may make it easier for TANF clients to access vocational education services. Michigan's welfare agency is responsible only for determining participant eligibility; Work First contractors (including the WDBs) handle case management and employment and training services. Consequently, the local boards have opportunities to provide clients with information about a variety of training options.
- ***A task force structure that includes all relevant agencies may help to ensure program success***. A number of the individuals we interviewed cited ATP's task force as a primary reason for its success. Because it involves all relevant agencies — including the college, welfare agency, transit authority, workforce board, child care agency, Jobs Commission, transitional housing provider, and employers — the task force makes it easier for the program to address whatever barriers students encounter. As one respondent explained, "We have people who will . . . change bureaucracy." By including employer representatives on the task force, ATP helped ensure their companies' commitment to the program.
- ***Employment and training agencies may find it easiest to recruit and retain clients if they offer intensive short-term programs***. College administrators believed, based on their experience in training dislocated workers, that intensive short-term training could be effective when specific companies were involved. They also thought that welfare recipients would be more likely to succeed in a short-term program that "became the focal point of their lives," especially when the program was short enough that they could see its ending date on their calendars.

  As work requirements increase, however, employment and training agencies may have to adopt different models. ATP administrators speculated that—unless the state exempted participants from the work requirement—they might have to lengthen the program or adopt an apprenticeship model when the requirement increased to 30 hours in July 1999.

- ***Providing students with regular feedback*** throughout the program can help ensure their success. ATP initiated a regular performance review process to promptly identify and address problems that emerged while participants were attending classes. While students are completing their internships, the program coordinator maintains

close contact with employer representatives (particularly Kelly's on-site supervisors) so she can address any issues that clients or employers identify.

- ***A combination of soft skills and customized training can be effective*** in placing welfare recipients in high-paying jobs. Both program staff and employer representatives agreed that soft skills were critical for success. "Technical training," one respondent noted, "is not the key. We have people addressing all barriers and life issues (so that participants) get soft skills they haven't had before through example." ATP's curriculum incorporates both soft skills and customized training based on the Work Keys job profiling process.
- ***Support from a powerful advocate*** — such as a state legislator, elected official, or another individual who is influential in the community — may be essential for program success. Nearly everyone we spoke with mentioned Representative Price's role in ATP's success. According to the program director, the involvement of a powerful advocate (especially in the early stages of program development and implementation) may be essential. She suggested, however, that program developers in other communities might well be able to identify and enlist the support of such a leader.

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Research Triangle Park, North Carolina

Overview

Research Triangle Park's (RTP's) Center for Employment Training (CET), which opened in June 1995, is one of 40 training centers around the country that use the California-based nonprofit's well-known model to prepare disadvantaged individuals for entry-level positions in specific careers. Originally designed to help improve the economic condition of migrant farmworkers, CET operates corporate centers in California, Nevada, Virginia, Maryland, Florida, New York, North Carolina, Illinois, and Texas. Like other east coast sites, the RTP program is a "replication" site created with support from a 1992 U.S. Department of Labor grant.

CET's model relies on classroom instruction that integrates basic skills, human development, and vocational training. Its programs — which are open-entry/open-exit, self-paced, and individualized — emphasize competency-based, hands-on training. The centers also offer life skills workshops that address issues such as substance abuse, parenting, and financial planning. They provide support services, including child care and transportation, either directly or through linkages with local social service agencies.

Although centers across the country offer training for a total of more than 30 skills, most sites provide instruction in only four or five areas. CET determines what instruction to offer at each center by conducting a labor market assessment to identify skills for which there is a sustained demand, and that offer a career path.

Prospective students receive a general orientation, help in choosing a skill, a skill-specific orientation, and a two-week "tryout." Before an individual officially enrolls, center staff develop "Individual Service Strategies" to address each student's needs. CET programs simulate workplace conditions, traditionally lasting seven hours a day, five days a week, for about seven months (although students may complete the program in shorter or longer periods of time). Because of this schedule, the centers serve primarily individuals who are not already working. Most sites, however, now also offer shorter-term instruction with flexible day and evening and/or weekend schedules to accommodate welfare clients.

After a student completes the program, a CET job developer assists her in preparing a resume, practicing interviewing techniques, and completing applications. Job developers maintain contact with students for at least six months after they become employed.

Context

State

North Carolina implemented its WorkFirst program in July 1995. Since that time, the state has witnessed a 47 percent decrease in its welfare participant population; as of December 1998, 60,296 North Carolina families received welfare benefits versus 113,485 in June 1995. According to the State Department of Health and Human Services (North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, 1999), key components of WorkFirst include:

> *Work.* Welfare participants have 12 weeks within which they must either obtain a job or enroll in short-term job training.
>
> *Limited benefits.* Welfare participation is limited to 24 months (local review boards may, however, grant month-to-month extensions in hardship cases; in addition, the state allows former recipients to reapply for benefits three years after leaving welfare).
>
> *Personal responsibility.* Welfare participants: (1) must sign and abide by a "mutual responsibility contract" that outlines their plan for moving from welfare to work; (2) cannot receive supplemental payments for children born after 10 months of participation in WorkFirst; and (3) in the case of teen parents, must stay in school and reside with a parent or guardian.
>
> *Self-sufficiency.* Welfare participants can receive Medicaid for up to one year after transitioning from welfare to work, and families at risk of going on welfare due to a crisis may obtain an emergency grant.
>
> *Protection for children.* WorkFirst offers affordable child care and continued health coverage for children whose families have left welfare. In addition, the mutual responsibility contracts require that parents agree to get needed health care for their children and see that their children attend school regularly.

North Carolina administers its welfare-to-work funds through two separate streams. The Department of Health and Human Services administers all TANF funds, while the Department of Commerce administers federal Department of Labor funds for hard-to-serve welfare participants. Welfare-to-work funding is in the form of state grants. The state allocates some grants to local workforce development boards and distributes others to agencies and organizations on a competitive basis. The grants may be used for wage subsidies, on-the-job and job readiness

training, work experience, and supportive services. Seventy percent of all state funding is earmarked for "long-term welfare recipients who have labor market deficiencies"; the remaining 30 percent may be used for "individuals who have characteristics associated with long-term welfare dependency" (North Carolina Department of Commerce, n.d.).

North Carolina provides WorkFirst services to welfare participants through its Departments of Social Services, as well as a network of one-stops referred to as "JobLink Career Centers." Researchers from Corporation for a Skilled Workforce and Strumpf Associates examined all of the state's JobLink Career Centers in Fall 1998. Based on their research, they report that the centers have: (1) improved communication among partner agencies; (2) created a customer- and staff-friendly environment; and (3) helped customers conduct independent searches for available employment and education and training opportunities. They add, however, that the JobLink system's sustainability depends upon: (1) an integrated electronic information system; (2) more dedicated staff and opportunities for capacity building; and (3) new cost-sharing arrangements (i.e., partner agencies need to make substantial financial commitments to the system) (Corporation for a Skilled Workforce and Strumpf Associates, 1999).

State welfare reform legislation, enacted in 1997 and 1998, gives North Carolina's 100 counties considerable flexibility in designing their WorkFirst programs, including decisions about allowable work activities. After considerable debate, legislators decided to allow counties that had no more than 15.5 percent of the state's WorkFirst cases even greater discretion, including the ability to set their own eligibility requirements and benefit levels (North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, 1999b). Unfortunately for CET's RTP site, which operated under a single contract with the state prior to 1997, delays in passage of the legislation led to a temporary suspension of its funding in July of that year, which adversely affected its enrollment for 1997. Devolution of responsibility also made it necessary for the center to negotiate individual contracts with the three counties it serves (although none are "electing" counties).

Local

Unlike most CET programs, the one we visited had served multiple counties, including Durham, Wake, Orange, Warren, and Johnston. Collectively, the counties have a population of just over one million; in July 1999, they served 5,373 TANF clients (North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, 1999a). The center's 16,000-square-foot facility is located in

RTP, a planned research and development park in the center of Durham, Orange, and Wake counties. The Park is home to about 130 firms, including Glaxo Wellcome, IBM, Toshiba, Broadband Technologies, Northern Telecom, and General Electric. Duke University and its School of Medicine are located in the nearby city of Durham, about seven miles away. Individuals from Wake and Orange Counties travel about 20 miles to the center, while those from Warren and Johnson Counties traveled about 40 miles.

Unemployment in the area is low: about two percent. Twenty-eight percent of employment is in the service industry, while manufacturing accounts for 17 percent of jobs (North Carolina Employment Security Commission, 1998). The region is demographically diverse: about 40 percent of the residents in Durham County, and 20 percent of those in Wake County, are African American, and the area has a rapidly growing Latino population.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Participating agencies and organizations

CET's main office in San Jose, California, oversees 26 of the organization's 40 training centers around the country, including the RTP location. (The remainder are independent replication sites, operated by local community-based organizations.) The national organization's Board of Directors comprises 24 members who reflect the composition of the communities that it serves, including individuals representing education and training programs, social service agencies, community-based organizations, alumni, and others. The Board establishes policies; CET's Executive Director is responsible for implementing those policies and overseeing operations. Each local center reports fiscal and performance data to the corporate office.

CET's regional directors and planners serve as the link between the California office and local programs. Its regional director helped establish the RTP program and hired the current director. Based at RTP, the regional representative continues to serve as a source of information and training for the center.

Local centers follow the traditional CET design and adhere to its program and personnel policies. The central office furnishes local sites with a Management Information System, manages their payrolls, and provides them with information and training. According to the regional director, the central office serves as "a guiding light" to help local programs when they encounter difficulties. The California office also approves local skill offerings and provides a "core" curriculum for each one.

Like all CET programs, the RTP site has a nongoverning Industrial Advisory Council (IAC) comprising representatives of private-sector employers (usually executive officers, human resources officers, or general managers). One of the major responsibilities of the IAC, which meets once a month, is to assist in identifying the skills that local employers need. Based on IAC input and a labor market survey, the RTP program has eliminated two training programs (Medical Assistant and Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning Maintenance Repairer) and added two others (Automated Office Skills and Medical Insurance Billing) since it opened in 1995. The IAC also advises on curriculum content, equipment acquisition, and resources, as well as providing information on labor market trends and job openings. Its members arrange tours and workshops for CET students, encourage business and industry representatives to tour the center, provide input on program improvement, and participate in an annual job fair. According to the RTP site's director, the IAC benefits not only the center but its members as well, since it gives them an opportunity to "do business and network" (i.e., to make referrals and assist each other).

For each skill area, the local center also has a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), which provides guidance on specific courses offered. Members of these committees (usually technical staff members, rather than administrators) advise on content, curriculum, equipment, training materials, and methods. They visit the center frequently to conduct mock interviews and help students prepare resumes, and may also be in a position to influence their companies' hiring decisions. The chairperson of each committee automatically becomes a member of the IAC.

As Exhibit 1 shows, the RTP's IAC and TACs include representatives of a wide variety of organizations, many of which are also involved in the local one-stop center. To facilitate coordination with the career center, CET has hosted tours and made presentations for its personnel. As a training vendor, the center hopes to see an increase in referrals from the one - stop. According to the RTP program's director, it is advisable to establish the networking relationships necessary to operate a successful employment training program before beginning operations. Programs similar to his own, he recommends, should "be explicit about who you are, what you want to do, how you can collaborate," and encourage other organizations to express any concerns that they have. While some education and training providers see a new program as a complement, others may view it as competition. For example, some community colleges in the RTP area initially considered CET a competitor; administrators have worked to persuade them that the center can serve as a "springboard" for individuals who might not otherwise attend the colleges.

Exhibit 1. Employers Represented on Industrial Advisory Council and Technical Advisory Committees

ABB Power
AllTel Communications
Austin Quality Foods
Bryant-Durham Electric
City of Durham Economic and Employment Development
Cree Research (electronics)
Duke University and Medical Center
Durham Technical Community College
Durham School-to-Work Partnership
Durham County Hospital Corporation
Employment Security Commission
Ericsson (telecommunications)
Express Personnel Services
First Call Medical of Durham
Georgia Pacific (forest products)
Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce
Greer Personnel
IBM
Lincoln Community Health Center
Logic Marine
Manpower Temporary Service
Monarch Services
Norrell Services
Nortel (Northern Telecom)
North Carolina State University
North Carolina Central University
Orange County Employment Security Commission
Organon Teknika (health care products and equipment)
Piedmont Health Services
Progressive Business Solutions
Raleigh Community Hospital
Rex Healthcare
Snelling (recruiting)
The Long Group (transportation, warehousing, distribution)
Toshiba Battery USA
Triangle J Council of Governments
Underwriters' Laboratories
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Volt Services Group (staffing)
Wake County Employment Security Commission
Wake County Vocational Rehabilitation
Wake County Department of Health and Human Services
Western Wake Medical Center

The RTP program facilitates student involvement in several ways. Students attend a monthly assembly, where they receive and share information of interest to other participants and staff. They also serve as members of the program's student council, acting as a liaison between participants and staff, recommending program improvements, and providing encouragement for fellow students. Graduates may return to the program as speakers or for special events.

SERVICES

Participant characteristics

CET accepts everyone beyond the age of compulsory school attendance; there are no entrance requirements. According to a representative of its national office, "Our mission is to serve those most in need." Historically, the centers have enrolled a variety of disadvantaged

individuals, including JTPA clients,[1] migrant farm workers, and injured workers. Because most CET centers are accredited postsecondary institutions, individuals who are not eligible for specific federal programs can finance their training through Pell grants and student loans, including Stafford and PLUS Loans.

From July 1, 1996, to June 30, 1997, CET-operated centers served 6,277 individuals. One in five was 21 or younger; 65 percent were between 22 and 44. Half had less than a high school education, and about one-third had limited proficiency in English. About 25 percent were welfare recipients.

At the "replication" sites, however, welfare recipients generally account for 50 to 95 percent of participants. The RTP site is no exception: 90 percent of its students receive either welfare benefits or food stamps. The majority of students are African American women; about 90 percent are single parents. Most are between the ages of 22 and 44, although about 10 percent of those who have enrolled in the center since it opened have been teen parents. About one-third of the center's clients do not have a high school diploma.

Most of CET's students are referred by the Departments of Social Services (DSSs) in Durham, Wake, and Orange Counties. According to one caseworker whom we interviewed, most TANF clients who are interested in the RTP program can be accommodated; often, individuals cannot participate because they need immediate employment. A second caseworker indicated that, although she thought highly of the programs in general, it might not be suitable for mothers with infants because of transportation difficulties (see below under "Support services").

In addition to DSSs, the RTP center receives referrals from JTPA and vocational rehabilitation programs. Telamon Corporation, a private nonprofit employment and training organization that serves migrant farmworkers and other economically disadvantaged individuals, also refers some participants. CET recruits additional students through brochures, public service announcements, television commercials, flyers, posters, staff presentations, and word of mouth (through graduates). Because it is an accredited postsecondary institution, the RTP center also attracts some self-referrals who are eligible for federal student loan programs.

All students who enroll at the center take the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) at entry. Those who are applying for federal student loans must also take an "Ability to Benefit"

[1]Historically, JTPA funds provided more than 60 percent of CET's funding.

test approved by the U.S. Department of Education. For this purpose, administrators use the Wonderlic Basic Skills Test.

Description of services

Instructional program. At the time of our visit, the RTP site offered training in four areas: Electronics Technology, Shipping/Receiving and Warehouse Operations, Automated Office Skills, and Medical Insurance Billing. The central office provides a core curriculum for each skill area, which local TAC's and instructors augment and adapt to meet the needs of local employers. As shown in Attachment 1 at the end of this report, each course is based on eight to 11 competencies, each with its own list of grouped subtasks.

CET programs rely on a holistic integrated model, including classroom instruction that integrates basic skills, human development, and vocational training. Their classes — which are open-entry/open-exit, self-paced, and individualized — emphasize competency-based, hands-on training. Instructors use a combination of exercises, handouts, demonstrations, short lectures, videos, computer-assisted tutorials, and hands-on training. For example, students in the RTP center's Shipping/Receiving and Warehouse Operations program handle shipping and receiving for the building, and also receive and inventory computers donated to area nonprofits through United Way and IBM's Gifts-In-Kind Program.

In order to meet WorkFirst requirements, students at CET's RTP location attend class for 35 hours a week. The program models the work environment: classes begin at 8:30 a.m. and end at 4 p.m. Students must punch a time clock four times a day, and call before 8:30 if they will be late. They cannot miss more than 20 percent of total possible hours. "This is kind of their 'weaning off' [public assistance]," one individual we interviewed explained. "This is their 'pretend work.'"

The center's policies for dealing with absences also emulate those used in the work environment, with a progressive series of disciplinary actions. If an individual is absent for one day without calling, a staff member will try to contact her. If the staff member cannot contact the student by phone, she may conduct a home visit. If the student is absent for two consecutive days, CET contacts her caseworker. A student with more than 10 consecutive days of unreported or unexcused absences is administratively terminated. The center uses a similar approach for unsatisfactory performance (e.g., poor work habits or behaviors), which involves a series of verbal and written warnings, followed by suspension. Students who experience a serious illness

or a personal or family emergency can request a leave of absence, although funding sources generally require that they be terminated after 60 days.

To encourage regular attendance, and to give students a feeling of accomplishment, instructors try to teach something new every day; they offer no make-up work. To help manage open entry/open exit classes and to build students' confidence, they often use "peer teaching," in which an experienced student is assigned to orient a new enrollee to the skill area. One student whom we interviewed described her experience with this approach: "When I first started. . ." she explained, "there was a guy there who was almost job-ready and was getting ready to leave. My instructor told him that he had to start training me. I was so nervous. And now, everybody that comes in, I have to train them. I never thought I'd get to that point where I would be training people."

Both staff members and participating employers recognize the importance of "soft" skills, which CET integrates into the curriculum. "The soft skills are what they (employers) want," one staff member observed. "More than anything else, they want the students to be there every day." CET has also historically integrated basic skills instruction into its curriculum. As the DSSs have begun to work with harder-to-serve individuals, however, center administrators have found that some students need basic skills instruction in addition to the GED preparation that CET now provides through a contract with the Durham Literacy Council. Participating students attend GED classes for two hours three times a week.

The center individualizes instruction primarily through the development of Individual Service Strategies (ISSs; see Exhibit 2) developed by its Intake Advisor or instructors. After the ISS is complete, the instructor creates a Competency Completion Plan (Exhibit 3), which he and the trainee review periodically. Students must achieve a certain percentage of competencies at specific intervals; e.g., at least one competency by the end of 25 percent of scheduled course hours, 30 percent of competencies at the end of 50 percent of course hours; and all competencies within 150 percent of scheduled hours. They demonstrate mastery in a variety of ways, including written exams, hand-on demonstrations, oral presentations, and discussions. Students maintain portfolios for review and meet formally with their instructors at least once a month. If their progress is unsatisfactory, the instructor completes a Corrective Action Plan with the student.

In the future, RTP administrators would like to offer programs that accommodate part-time schedules, although — due to transportation problems — they may have to relocate in order

Exhibit 2. Individual Service Strategy

CENTER FOR EMPLOYMENT TRAINING

Skill

INDIVIDUAL SERVICE STRATEGY

Assessment Scores Included: Yes ☐ No ☐

1 Personal Information Name	2 Background Education
Address	Experience
Telephone Social Security Number	Skills Interests
3 Employment Goals (After Skills Training)	4 Occupational Skills Needed

5 Barriers to Training And Employment	YES	NO	A Barrier	B. Specify	C. Proposed Solution	D Date/Action Taken
			Medical			
			Transportation			
			Legal			
			Family			
			Academic			
			Attitude			
			Motivation			
			Other			

Staff Signature | Participant Signature | Date | Family Member/Friend

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Exhibit 2. (continued)

6 Assessment Tests	A. Area	B. Name of Test	C. Score	D. Date Administered	E. Action	
	Achievement					
	Interest					
	Aptitude					

7 Assessment Conferences	A. Date	B. Summary	C. Follow-up Activities	D. Initials
8 Progress Conferences During Training	A. Date	B. Summary	C. Follow-up Activities	D. Initials
9 Job Ready Activities	A. Date	B. Activity	C. Outcome/Comments	D. Follow-up
10 Job Referral	A. Date	B. Employer	C. Job	D. Follow-up
11 Follow-up	A. Date	B. Type of Contact	C. Result	

Name

Social Security Number

Exhibit 3. Competency Completion Plan

Name
Skill Area
Start date
Projected end date

Competency	Hours	Planned Completion Date	Actual Completion Date	Scores	Comments
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					
9.					
10.					

to do so (see discussion below under "Support services").[2] They also hope to strengthen the center's connections with community colleges in the area. One DSS representative also suggested that it might be desirable to have a social worker on site to facilitate immediate follow-up as students' problems arise.

Support services. Like all CET programs, the RTP site provides support services either directly or through linkages with other agencies. For TANF clients, caseworkers assist with child care, legal matters, housing arrangements, and financial matters. CET staff encourage students to address health needs (e.g., medical care, vision exams, and dental work) while they are receiving TANF benefits, so that they do not have to miss time from work later (and since their employers' health insurance plans make not take effect immediately).

[2] Since our site visit, CET has opened a Raleigh branch to accommodate Wake County residents.

Local DSSs provide funding for transportation: those in Durham and Orange Counties pay for vans that not only bring participants to class, but transport their children to and from school. For some prospective participants, however, the RTP location is not a convenient one. Although CET is located within one block of a public bus route, the distance from nearby cities makes it necessary for many individuals to change buses several times in order to reach the center. At the time of our visit, the RTP program was operating below capacity, due largely to transportation issues. It served only 60 individuals which, according to the director, represented one-half of its capacity. To improve enrollment, the center is likely to relocate in the near future, possibly to Durham and Raleigh.

Because of the travel distances involved — as well as the center's full-day, year-round schedule — child care can also be an issue for some participants. For example, it can be difficult for a mother whose child is sick to get home quickly. Several of the students we interviewed recommended that CET consider providing child care (other than that available through WorkFirst) for periods when school is out, especially during the summer.

The center's program also encompasses life skills instruction provided by instructors, representatives of community-based organizations or social service agencies, or IAC members every other Friday. Recent topics have included nutrition, parenting, family wellness, domestic violence, budgeting, conflict resolution, substance abuse, cultural diversity, anger management, and professional etiquette.

CET also offers a Resource Center where students have access to a copier, FAX machine, PC's, and the Employment Security Commission's Job Bank. The center contains a variety of occupational, career, and job search materials furnished by the Employment Security Commission, State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee, community colleges, and local employers. It includes literature on general topics of interest (e.g., consumer affairs, personal finance, and life skills), as well as reference materials such as classified ads, bus schedules, street maps, job listings, and information on day care centers.

The program offers a number of incentives for its students and graduates. As Exhibit 4 indicates, students earn bonus points for good attendance, completing course competencies, and job retention, which they can exchange for awards such as gift certificates and savings bonds. Individuals who have perfect attendance for the month receive certificates at the monthly assembly, and staff members post a framed list of recipients. A "Trainee of the Month" award

Exhibit 4. Trainee and Graduate Incentive Program

Points	Activity
50	Official program enrollment
50	Perfect attendance for each month of class (up to eight)
50	Satisfactory progress on competencies each 25 percent of average course hours (no probation)
75	Bonus points for trainee of the month
25	Complete 100 percent accurate employment application
25	Complete resume
25	Complete cover letter and thank you note
25	Exhibit appropriate interview appearance and skills
50	Perfect attendance at Job Club sessions
50	Documented first interview
100	Completing all course competencies – graduating
100	Completing all GED requirements (either while enrolled or within six months of placement)
200	Getting a job (minimum 30 hours/week at minimum of $7.25 hour)
100	30 days of continuous employment – verified
125	60 days of continuous employment – verified
150	90 days of continuous employment – verified
200	180 days of continuous employment – verified
100	Returning to CET as a guest speaker

Awards

Points	Award	Conditions
100	Video rental	Limit three
150	$5 phone card	
150	$5 restaurant coupon	
300	$10 phone card	Limit three
300	$10 movie passes	
400	CET logo T-shirt	Limit two
500	$20 grocery store gift certificate	Limit two
750	$50 US Savings Bond	Limit two
1,000	$100 US Savings Bond	Limit one

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program recognizes students who have perfect attendance, excellent attitudes, and leadership qualities. CET also holds an annual graduation ceremony. "For a lot of our folks," the director explained, "it's the first time they ever finished anything, got a diploma, had a gown on, walked up and got it and had people applaud for them." Another remarked that many: "Clients...have never really had anyone to care at all . . ."

Post-employment services. CET integrates job preparation into its daily class activities, including information on filling out applications, writing resumes, preparing cover and thank you letters, interviewing skills, job search strategies, dressing for success, working in teams, and taking direction. IAC representatives present job-related seminars, host tours of their facilities, and conduct mock interviews.

When a student is job-ready (as determined by instructors), CET's job developer assists her in updating her resume, completing applications, and practicing interview techniques. Students have found that preparation for interviews, while not one of the course competencies, is particularly helpful: they reported that one IAC representative (who worked for a temporary agency) talked with them in detail about what to say and what not to say, how to dress, how to fix their hair, and what colors to wear together. "If you had any doubts in you, they were out when she finished talking to you," one explained. "You were very self-confident after she finished . . ."

The center's job developer maintains contact with students and reports their progress at 30, 60, 90, and 180 days after employment. CET offers continual assistance to students who lose their jobs through no fault of their own (i.e., layoffs or poor working environments), allowing them to return to any program location for retraining or employment assistance. Shortly before our visit, for example, half a dozen graduates of the Electronics program lost their jobs when an entire shift of workers was laid off. All returned to CET to update and distribute their resumes, and all are now working again. "We're like a family," the center's director explained, "and it's a lifetime investment here."

Resources

Staff

The RTP program's staff includes its:

- ***Director;***
- ***Intake/resource advisor,*** a former DSS employee with a degree in social work;

- ***Job developer,*** who worked at another CET site before coming to RTP and holds certificates in personnel administration and career planning;
- ***Financial aid/billing specialist;*** and
- ***Instructors***, all of whom are recruited from the private sector.

Many of the individuals we interviewed believed that the center's instructors were its most important resource. "It really comes down to that instructor," the director explained. "If you've got the right person in there, you're cooking with gas...." Students agreed that instructors' attitudes were important, as evidenced by these comments from individuals we interviewed:

> If you haven't been in school for 10 or 15 years, this is one of the things that you will probably have to fear: how will they perceive me? But they don't make you feel like that. . .and now that people come to me, I try to make them feel that same way. . . I get that from what I see going on around me.

> . . . I don't trust anyone. I'd say, 'They're too nice, what do they want?' . . . I said (laughing), 'Something is wrong and I'm going to find out what's going on.'

> She's not just my instructor, she's my best friend.

New staff members attend one- to two-week training sessions in San Jose, where they learn about CET's history, philosophy, model, policies, and procedures. During part of the training, they are teamed with experienced colleagues. Instructors and other personnel also receive additional training through in-service training sessions held about six times a year, as well as one or two regional meetings that include training, and community workshops. They are also encouraged to attend professional meetings; IAC members assist in identifying appropriate training opportunities.

Fiscal

For Fiscal Year (FY) 1999, CET's total budget was about $1,050,000. CET projected that most of that funding ($700,000) would come from local DSSs; the center also budgeted $70,000 for JTPA clients. Another $70,000 was to come from "straight tuition" students who are responsible for their own fees. About one student in three receives a Pell grant; those who are welfare recipients use 10 percent of the grant for personal expenses, while 90 percent is used for their tuition at CET.

As Exhibit 5 shows, tuition for CET courses ranges from about $5,600 to $6,500. Local funding agencies (e.g., the DSSs) pay the full cost for all students who complete 60 percent of average attendance hours (less any amount covered by Pell grants). For those who withdraw before completing 60 percent of average hours, costs are prorated according to the number of hours of enrollment completed to average course length; e.g., if student completed one-third of average time, CET keeps one-third of tuition. Administrators report, however, that few students drop out because of academic problems: those who leave usually do so because of personal issues.

Exhibit 5. CET Tuition

Course name	Hours	Weeks	Tuition
Automated office skills	810	24	$6,492
Electronics technology	810	24	$6,492
Shipping receiving and warehouse operations	720	21	$6,026
Medical insurance billing	630	18	$5,560

About $200,000 for tuition and support services for hard-to-serve individuals at the RTP site comes from a DOL competitive welfare-to-work grant that CET's national office received in 1998. This project, which will train 3,000 TANF recipients in 26 CET centers, includes four components: (1) a vocational English as a Second Language program; (2) General Employment Training for Jobs (GET-JOBS), a six-week job training feeder program designed for individuals with previous work experience and strong life skills; (3) Short-Term Employment Training (SET-JOBS), which includes nine-week programs that build on participants' current occupational skills; and (4) NET-JOBS, CET's traditional model, which lasts an average of 26 weeks (Center for Employment Training, 1999). Like other local programs we visited, however, the RTP site has experienced some difficulty in attracting participants who meet DOL's criteria for "hard-to-serve." Some individuals who would like to enroll in the center's programs cannot do so because they do not qualify for any specific program: the center's director explained that he had to turn people away sometimes because there was ". . . no funding that I can attach to them," especially because of strict welfare-to-work eligibility requirements.

CET also seeks funds from local sources; e.g., the center recently received a $10,000 grant from the Triangle Community Foundation for its GED program. Administrators are

exploring the possibility of obtaining additional funding from probation/parole departments, public housing, Economic Development and Supportive Services grant money, veterans' Chapter 31 disability benefits, and Worker's Compensation insurance carriers.

OUTCOMES

During 30 years of operation, CET programs across the nation have trained and placed 80,000 individuals, about one-third of whom were welfare recipients. Several major evaluations, including the following, provide evidence concerning the effectiveness of its model:

- ***A study of the Minority-Female Single-Parent Demonstration project,*** funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, in which CET participated. According to Meléndez (1996), this study showed that CET participants increased their earnings by $2,000 30 months after they left the program.
- ***An evaluation of the Jobstart demonstration program by Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation.*** Modeled after the residential Job Corps program, Jobstart operated in 13 communities, supported primarily with JTPA funds, from 1985 to 1988. As one of the demonstration sites, San Jose's CET had an average earnings impact of more than $6,500 for each youth in the final two years of the follow-up study. This improvement was larger than that for any other site in the study (Cave, Bos, Doolittle, and Toussaint, 1993).

In North Carolina, a study by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's (UNC-CH's) Jordan Institute for Families also found evidence of CET's success. In an evaluation of two alternative approaches to preparing N.C. welfare recipients for work (CET's RTP program and Goodwill Industries' Reaching Independence Through Employment [RITE]), researchers found that, while only about 58 percent of WorkFirst participants in general found jobs, 80 percent of CET graduates did so. CET services, they concluded, were the most likely to lead to self-sufficiency. Employment Security Commission records showed that CET graduates had average earnings of $4,075 over a six-month period, versus $2,333 and $1,935 for WorkFirst participants in two counties served by the program. UNC-CH researchers also found that CET participants reported higher levels of social support than those in RITE. "These differences," they explained, "may reflect the greater level of contact and colleagueship exhibited at CET, given the full-time and peer-oriented training they received" (p. 28). In focus groups, CET students noted that the opportunity to share ideas about employment, and to learn along with others, appealed to them (Orthner et al., 1997).

Each CET location reports information on placement rates, average wages, and costs to the national office. Exhibit 6 shows outcome data for the RTP site.

Exhibit 6. RTP Outcome Data

	FY '95-'96	FY '96-'97	FY '97-'98	FY '98-'99 (YTD)*
Placement rate	82%	81%	79%	78%
Number of placements	63	100	66	98
Average wage at placement	$7.34		$7.59	$8.10
Cost per participant (enrolled student)				$3,326 (vs. $3,529 nationally)**
Cost per successful outcome (placement and/or completion)				$6,230 (vs. $6,551 nationally)**

* As of May 31, 1999. At year end, CET had an 82 percent placement rate (115 individuals), with an average wage of $8.15.

** At the time of our visit, the RTP site had a shorter training period and a higher placement rate than CET's national average, which accounts for lower costs at the RTP site.

SOURCE: *CET-Research Triangle outcome data. Prepared for RTI on May 28, 1999.*

Implications

CET's experience offers a number of lessons concerning the context in which welfare-to-work programs operate, their organizational structures, the services they provide, the resources they require, and the outcomes they produce, including the following:

- ***Program administrators can foster a committed and caring attitude among their staff*** through appropriate training and opportunities for team building. During their initial training at CET's San Jose headquarters, staff members learn not only about the center's program and policies, but also about its philosophy: "We're in a movement," one explained, "we're not just service providers." Many of those we interviewed attributed CET's success largely to the committed and caring attitude of its staff members. "They just won't quit," one student explained, "and they won't allow you to quit."
- ***Hands-on training helps students see the "light at the end of the tunnel" and gives them a feeling of accomplishment.*** As one DSS worker we interviewed noted, TANF clients in difficult personal circumstances sometimes have trouble visualizing how their investment in education and training will pay off. At CET, students immediately begin working with the tools and machinery that they will use in the workplace. "Seeing the light at the end of the tunnel" helps students persist in the program. It also improves self-confidence: as the center's regional director explained, "You break down the barrier of fear almost immediately."

- ***Organizational linkages with business and industry also facilitate program success.*** A willingness to listen and respond to business and industry, according to one employer representative whom we interviewed, is a primary reason for CET's success. The center's organizational structure incorporates strong linkages with business and industry through its IACs and TACs. This structure provides the program with input from both executive officers and front-line staff: while IAC members help determine what training the center should offer and assist in tailoring a core curriculum to suit local needs, technical staff members who serve on TACs provide more specific advice on equipment, training materials, and methods.
- ***Peer support increases the likelihood that students will successfully obtain and retain jobs.*** CET's model incorporates peer support in a variety of ways, including the use of peer teaching. Center students who participated in one research effort noted that the opportunity to learn together appealed to them; many were able to share employment ideas and interests with other people for the first time (Orthner et al., 1997). Administrators ask former students to serve as speakers, or attend special events, in order to provide role models for current students. Some types of placements may also offer peer support: as one employer representative we interviewed noted, individuals who are placed together in a manufacturing environment may have a better support system than one person working alone in an office.
- ***CET's competency-based, self-paced model also facilitates student success.*** Students qualify as "job-ready" by demonstrating mastery of course competencies, rather than through seat time. They can progress through the program at a pace appropriate to their individual abilities and personal circumstances: those who are highly motivated may finish in less than the usual length of time. (One individual we interviewed graduated from a "six-month" program in four.) On the other hand, those who need more time can take up to 150 percent of scheduled course hours to demonstrate mastery of all competencies.
- ***Ongoing contact with the program's Job Developer helps ensure that students obtain and retain jobs.*** CET students who have completed training and are "job-ready" continue to come to the center until they find employment. Working with the program's job developer, they update their resumes, practice interviewing techniques, and complete applications. Job developers maintain contact with students for a minimum of six months after they become employed.

Attachment 1. CET Course Descriptions

Course Description for Medical Insurance Billing

Trainees learn to perform work-related tasks and duties in preparation for employment in the following occupations.

Occupational Objectives

245.362-010	Medical Record Clerk	214.482-018	Medical Voucher Clerk
205.362-018	Hospital Admitting Clerk	214.362-022	Insurance Clerk
205.362-030	Outpatient Admitting Clerk	237.367-038	Medical Receptionist
237.367-010	Appointment Clerk	241.362-010	Claims Clerk 1

Competency	Theory	Practice	Total Hours
1. **Medical Terminology:** Identify prefixes, suffixes, root words, medical abbreviations and symbols. Describe the systems of the body.	57	50	107
2. **Medical Office Administration:** Identify legal issues and reference books. Name the various fields of medicine.	9	7	16
3. **General Office Procedures:** Demonstrate proper telephone techniques, how to create a medical record, mail preparation and filing. Identify and order supplies. Type and proofread business letters. Measure typing for accuracy and speed. Demonstrate knowledge of word-processing and financial spreadsheet packages.	41	80	121
4. **Medical Forms:** Name various types of medical forms. Demonstrate proper completion of forms. Identify medical insurance cards.	35	72	107
5. **Math/Accounting/Bookkeeping:** Demonstrate basic math skills, proper usage of a calculator w tape and banking procedures. Identify accounting principles. Describe allowed, actual, co-pay and deductible.	12	22	34
6. **Medical Insurance:** Describe the history and eligibility of the major insurance carriers. Demonstrate proper completion of HCFA 1500 and UB-92 forms.	12	14	26
7. **Medical Coding:** Demonstrate diagnosis, procedural, level II and revenue coding. Identify type of service, place of service and occurrence codes.	30	89	119
8. **Computerized Billing/Simulated Work Experience:** Demonstrate practical knowledge of on-line medical billing system in a simulated work program.	20	80	100
Total Hours of Instruction	216	414	630

- Language and computation skills, problem solving skills and personal quality skills are taught within the context of the Medical Insurance Billing occupational environment.

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Course Description for Shipping, Receiving and Warehouse Operations

Trainees learn to perform work-related tasks and duties in preparation for employment in the following occupations.

Occupational Objectives

222.687-022	Routing Clerk	222.387-026	Inventory Clerk
299.477-010	Merchandise Deliverer	222.587-018	Distributing Clerk
222.387-050	S&R Clerk	239.567-010	Office Helper
222.387-058	Stock Clerk	299.367-014	Stock Clerk
222.367-018	Expediter	921.683-050	Forklift Truck Operator
905.663-014	Delivery Driver	929.687-030	Material Handler
		221.367-042	Material Expediter

Competency	Theory	Practice	Total Hours
1. **Safety in the Shipping & Receiving Environment:** Learn to observe and follow OSHA standards for workplace safety; practice safe manual powered lifting procedures.	30	45	75
2. **Warehouse Technology:** Identify, describe, and use equipment & tools properly including: tape dispensers, electronic scales, cutters, sealers, steel strappers, hand trucks, dollies, stock carts, pallet truck and tensioner.	30	50	80
3. **Receiving Operations:** Acquire experience performing various receiving department duties: handle shipments, process paperwork; inspect shipments for damaged merchandise; prepare receiving reports.	50	80	130
4. **Shipping Operations/Methods of Shipping:** Process and ship customer orders according to specifications following industry guidelines for the proper methods and procedures for shipping. Acquire experience using manual and computer assisted shipping procedures: prepare shipping forms and documentation, package, seal, weigh, and label shipments; select best mode of transportation; calculate freight charges.	60	90	150
5. **Inventory Control:** Acquire hands-on experience using computerized inventory control system; learn how to create database and maintain computerized inventory.	70	70	140
6. **Forklift:** Acquire hands-on experience operating a forklift; learn safety rules and inspection maintenance procedures; loading, unloading, stacking crates and pallets, etc.	55	90	145
Total Hours of Instruction	**295**	**425**	**720**

* Language, math, computation skills, problem solving skills and personal quality skills are taught within the context of the Shipping, Receiving and Warehouse Operations occupational environment.

Course Description for Electronic Technology

Trainees learn to perform work-related tasks and duties in preparation for employment in the following occupations.

Occupational Objectives

726.281-014	Electronic Tester I	726.684-026	Electronic Tester
726.261-010	Electronic Assembler	726.687-010	Electronic Worker
726.261-018	QC-Assembly Test Technician	726.684-022	Electronic Inspector

Competency	Theory	Practice	Total Hours
1. **Safety:** Learn and discuss OSHA safety standards for electrical occupations and workplaces; perform all skill related tasks assignments projects in accordance with OSHA standards.	24	32	56
2. **Component Identification:** Identify and describe basic components of electronic assembly; discuss functions of resistors, capacitors, diodes, transistors, transformers, inductors, integrated circuits.	16	40	56
3. **Soldering Techniques:** Learn and practice procedures for mounting components on a circuit board using a soldering iron; complete hands-on soldering work projects.	32	101	133
4. **Wiring and Harnessing:** Discuss wire diagrams, wire value, and conductivity; learn and practice procedures for wiring and harnessing; complete hands-on wiring and harnessing work projects.	24	103	127
5. **DC Theory:** Define voltage, current, resistance, power and energy. Use VOM and DVM meters and oscilloscopes to measure properties of a circuit; identify, describe and test resistors, capacitors, diodes, transistors, transformers and inductors.	45	45	90
6. **AC Theory:** Analyze and measure AC waveforms utilizing VOM, DMM, oscilloscope and frequency counter. Set up and operate power supplies; capacitor and inductor analyzers for AC circuits.	45	45	90
7. **Semiconductor Devices/Analog Circuits:** Learn and understand diodes, SCR, transistors, Op. Amp. Analyze and trouble shoot circuits utilizing semiconductor devices.	19	37	56
8. **Digital Circuits:** Learn to set up and operate logic probes, pulses, and pulse generators for digital circuits; construct flip-flops using integrated circuits, registers and counters using flip-flops and logic gates, clock and timing circuits, and digital-to-analog and analog-to-digital conversion circuits.	45	45	90
9. **Digital Computers:** Learn about the major functional blocks in a typical computer and the function of the CPU, memory, and I/O circuits.	56	56	112
Total Hours of Instruction	**306**	**504**	**810**

* Language and computation skills, problem solving skills and personal quality skills are taught within the context of the Electronic Technology occupational environment.

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Course Description for Automated Office Skills

Trainees learn to perform work-related tasks and duties in preparation for employment in the following occupations.

Occupational Objectives

203.362-010	Clerk-Typist	201.362-030	Secretary
209.562-010	Clerk, General	203.382-030	Word Proc. Mach. Op.
203.582-054	Data Entry Clerk	203.582-066	Typist (Clerical)
337.367-038	Receptionist		

Competency	Theory	Practice	Total Hours
1. **Filing:** Learn and practice systems of filing used in the automated office environment.	20	30	50
2. **Business Math:** Learn and practice math operations of the automated office.	20	40	60
3. **10-Key Calculator Skills:** Attain increased speed and accuracy using a ten key calculator to perform math operations of the automated office.	20	35	55
4. **Typing:** Attain increased speed and accuracy performing keyboarding and document formatting of business correspondence.	55	80	135
5. **Receptionist Skills/General Office:** Perform various receptionist and general office duties typical of the automated office.	35	55	90
6. **Business English:** Learn and use the technical vocabulary of the automated office including grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and format of business correspondence.	45	65	110
7. **Computer Skills 1-Intro. to Computers:** Learn basic hardware configurations, survey software applications and uses, and practice basic file maintenance for DOS.	45	65	110
8. **Computer Skills 2-Word Processing:** Learn and practice basic word processing functions and apply skills to hands-on work simulation projects.	45	65	110
9. **Computer Skills 3-Intro. to Spreadsheets:** Learn and practice basic spreadsheet commands/functions and apply skills to hands-on work simulation projects.	35	55	90
Total Hours of Instruction	**320**	**490**	**810**

* Language and computation skills, problem solving skills and personal quality skills are taught within the context of the Automated Office Skills occupational environment.

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Columbus County JobLink Career Center

Southeastern Community College
Whiteville, North Carolina

Overview

The Columbus County JobLink Career Center, housed at Southeastern Community College (SCC), is a collaborative effort of the Employment Security Commission, Department of Social Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) programs, and the community college. Developed "to provide employment and training services to all citizens," the center offers assistance to county residents seeking employment or advancement as well as to area employers. Center services include career and personal assessment and related counseling; employment readiness and preparation training; short and long-term skills training; literacy assessment and referrals; job placement and follow up; an employment resource center; and customized training and layoff aversion services. To address the needs of welfare participants under TANF, the center recently implemented Ladder to Success, a comprehensive welfare-to-work program designed to provide transitional assistance and facilitate economic self-sufficiency within the time limits imposed by welfare reform.

A model one-stop, the Columbus County JobLink Career Center has received a variety of awards for its services, including the Governor's Award for Outstanding Training and Placement Program (1995), the American Association for Women in Community Colleges' Model Program Award (1996), and the American Association of Community Colleges and United States Department of Labor Workforce Development Award for an Exemplary Program in One-Stop Center Career Services (1997). Respondents attributed the center's success to its staff, collaborative partnerships, and flexible and customer-focused approach to service provision.

Context

North Carolina implemented its welfare-to-work program, WorkFirst, in July 1995. Since that time, the state has witnessed a 47 percent decrease in its welfare participant population; as of December 1998, 60,296 North Carolina families received welfare benefits versus 113,485 in June 1995 (NCDHHS; 1999, February). According to the State Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS; 1999, February), key components of WorkFirst include:

Work. Welfare participants have 12 weeks within which they must either obtain a job or enroll in short-term job training.

Limited Benefits. Welfare participation is limited to 24 months (local review boards may, however, grant month-to-month extensions in hardship cases; in addition, the state allows former recipients to reapply for benefits three years after leaving welfare).

Personal Responsibility. Welfare participants: (1) must sign and abide by a "mutual responsibility contract" that outlines their plan for moving from welfare to work; (2) cannot receive supplemental payments for children born after 10 months of participation in WorkFirst; and, (3) in the case of teen parents, must stay in school and reside with a parent or guardian.

Self-Sufficiency. Welfare participants can receive Medicaid for up to one year after transitioning from welfare to work, and families at-risk of going on welfare due to a crisis may obtain an emergency grant.

Protection for Children. WorkFirst offers affordable child care and continued health coverage for children whose families have left welfare. In addition, the mutual responsibility contracts require that parents agree to get needed health care for their children and see that their children attend school regularly.

North Carolina administers its welfare-to-work funds through two separate streams. The Department of Health and Human Services administers all TANF funds, while the Department of Commerce administers Federal Department of Labor funds for hard-to-serve welfare participants. Welfare-to-work funding is in the form of state grants. The state allocates some grants to local workforce development boards and distributes others to agencies and organizations on a competitive basis. The grants may be used for wage subsidies, on-the-job and job readiness training, work experience, and supportive services. Seventy percent of all state funding is earmarked for "long-term welfare recipients who have labor market deficiencies;" the remaining 30 percent "may be used on individuals who have characteristics associated with long-term welfare dependency" (NCDC, n.d.).

North Carolina provides WorkFirst services to welfare participants through its Departments of Social Services, as well as a network of one-stops referred to as "JobLink Career Centers." Researchers from Corporation for a Skilled Workforce and Strumpf Associates examined all of the state's JobLink Career Centers in Fall 1998. Based on their research, they report that the centers have (1) improved communication between partner agencies, (2) created a customer and staff friendly environment, and (3) helped customers conduct independent searches for available employment and education and training opportunities. They add, however, that the JobLink system's sustainability depends upon (1) an integrated electronic information system,

(2) more dedicated staff and opportunities for capacity building, and (3) new cost sharing arrangements (i.e., partner agencies need to make substantial financial commitments to the system) (Corporation for a Skilled Workforce and Strumpf Associates, 1999).

The Columbus County JobLink Career Center housed at Southeastern Community College (SCC) operates under the governance of the Cape Fear Workforce Development Board and the Governor's Commission on Workforce Preparedness. SCC began to integrate its employment and training programs and formalize its inter-agency partnerships in 1993 with support from the regional Private Industry Council. According to the JobLink center director, the Columbus County facility has served as a model for other one-stops within the state since 1995.

The Columbus County JobLink Career Center is part of SCC's Division of Continuing Education which, according to its Vice President, is "a catalyst for economic development within Columbus County." He explained that division staff recruit new businesses to the county, offering on-site management services and even reduced rate workspace. The college then works with these (as well as established) industries to implement relevant training components for county residents. The Dean of Continuing Education described the JobLink center as "an important part of [SCC's] continuing education team," noting that the center provides "a single entry and referral point that is important for the livelihood of the college and citizens of Columbus County."

Columbus is a large, rural county with a land mass of 938 square miles and population of 51,556 individuals. The county's economic base consists largely of manufacturing and services, with some government, retail trade, construction, and agriculture. According to the JobLink center director, the county has one of the highest unemployment rates in the state (the county had an unemployment rate of 7.6 percent as of Spring 1999) and many dislocated workers (at the time of our research, three major textile operations had recently shut down). Center publications report that 23.9 percent of the county's residents receive public assistance and that the North Carolina Department of Commerce has identified the county as "economically distressed" (Southeastern Community College, 1998). These publications also cite the variety of contextual barriers that impede moving Columbus County TANF recipients into the workforce including a lack of public transportation and child care, the low level of education among residents, a shortage of employers with appropriate employment opportunities or human resources that can meet the extreme needs of the welfare-to-work population, and the small number and

concentrated nature of county social and support service agencies (Southeastern Community College, 1998).

The center director emphasized that the greatest challenge for welfare participants in North Carolina is keeping (versus finding) jobs and that, while current legislation emphasizes the role of the employer in providing training, employers within the state often do not have the resources to do so. Other staff members added that state legislation should provide more funds for programs to work with non-custodial fathers. SCC's Vice President of Continuing Education noted that North Carolina's current welfare legislation is weak in so far as it poses "too many funding restrictions" and "neglects barriers such as childcare and transportation." He did, however, compliment state officials on allowing vocational education to assume a prominent role in welfare reform, noting "When a state sees a good program they give them latitude."

Organizational Structure

Although housed at Southeastern Community College, the Columbus County JobLink Career Center is a collaborative effort of the Employment Security Commission, Department of Social Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) programs, and the community college. Other longstanding partner agencies integral to the center include the Cape Fear Council of Governments, Cape Fear Service Delivery Area Job Training Consortium, North Carolina Community College System, Columbus County JobReady Partnership[1] Columbus County Schools, Whiteville City Schools, North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs, and Telamon Corporation[2] (JobLink, n.d.c). Additional agencies that support the efforts of the center include the American Red Cross, Columbus County Day Care Association, Columbus County Health Department, Columbus County Interagency Transportation, Employers of Columbus County, Family Champions, Families First, Four County Community Action Agency, Job Corps, Mental Health Services, Public Housing Rental Agency, and Smart Start (JobLink, n.d.a).

The center is guided by a steering committee that includes JobLink and partner agency staff members, as well as representatives from other community organizations and employers. The steering committee drafted the initial business plan for the center and meets monthly to

[1] JobReady is North Carolina's school-to-work system.

[2] The Telamon Corporation provides a variety of services to migrant workers within the county.

discuss pertinent legislation and review center goals and activities. Southeastern Community College is directly responsible for supervising the JobLink staff (members of the staff are employees of the community college). Several agencies (including representatives from JTPA, JobReady, the Employment Security Commission, Vocational Rehabilitation, WorkFirst, and the Telamon Corporation) house staff members at SCC's facility at least one day per week.

The center director reported that while the various agencies that administer and support the JobLink Career Center "had good relationships prior to JobLink, JobLink made them push the one-stop idea further." She explained that the partners have increased the number of interagency meetings and coordinated their assessment processes, as well as worked jointly to find and fill job openings within the county. In addition, JobLink staff members reach out to other organizations through service on the county WorkFirst Committee, JobReady Partnership Council and steering committee, Family Champions Board of Directors, county Interagency Council, and Cape Fear JTPA Operators' Council. The center director concluded that a variety of agencies continue to participate in JobLink because "they benefit from the shared commitment to make things better" and "need shared funding to tackle major issues."

Services

Developed "to provide employment and training services to all citizens," the Columbus County JobLink Career Center offers assistance to anyone seeking employment or advancement (providing vocational education training both prior to and after employment), as well as to all employers. The center director reported that four core principles — universal service, customer choice and satisfaction, integration of agencies' services, and accountability — guide JobLink activities.

Center services for persons seeking employment or advancement include career and personal assessment and related counseling; employment readiness and preparation training; short and long-term skills training; literacy assessment and referrals (including a basic skills lab); job placement and follow up, and an employment resource center that offers independent (or, if desired, assisted) access to office equipment, job leads, and a career reference library. Short-term vocational training programs include: bank teller, basic clerical skills, basic computer, basic secretarial, computerized bookkeeping, coping skills, customer service training, in-home aide workplace skills, job search, medical insurance coding, secretarial brush-up, and survival skills (JobLink, February 1999). While these programs do focus on preparation for entry-level

positions, the center director noted that this focus coincides with job openings in Columbus County: "In Columbus County, most people start at minimum wage . . . . It is not the entry wage but their ability to move up that is critical. The reality is, they won't move directly into the middle class." She added that the center promotes advancement through open-entry/open-exit vocational course sequences that emphasize ever-increasing levels of technical complexity (e.g., computing, followed by medical technology, followed by medical coding, followed by medical transcription) and long-term skills training programs that lead to a two-year associate degree.

The center serves area employers by providing them with labor market information, resumes and referrals, and interview assistance as needed in addition to an annual job fair (attended by 600 persons, including representatives from 41 businesses in program year 1998-99). The center also provides customized training and "layoff aversion" services (e.g., outplacement, needs assessment) at the job site or at the college's Business and Industry Training Center (JobLink, September 1998). According to the center director, all of JobLink's programs incorporate input from and address the needs of local employers.

Program publications indicate that the center's short- and long-term vocational training "may or may not include a fee," while all other services are offered free of charge (Southeastern Community College, 1997, pp. 7-8). To support customer participation, the center offers financial assistance for program fees, child care services, and transportation to qualified applicants. The center director reported that while child care used to be the most pervasive barrier to service provision, joint efforts between the community college and area Smart Start programs have reduced this challenge considerably. She added that lack of transportation, however, continues to plague their center, which strives to serve the large, rural county. In addition to monetary assistance, the center facilitates participation through its varied hours of operation (it is open between 8:30 am and 5:00 pm on Monday and Friday, from 8:30 am to 10:00 pm Tuesday through Thursday, and between 8:30 am and 3:00 pm on Saturday) and multiple course locations (the center offers its vocational education classes at SCC's campus, as well as at Whiteville's WorkForce Prep Center, a downtown facility next door to the Employment Security Commission, and Tabor City's Family Champions facility). Other program support services include referrals to JobLink partners and other community agencies, job placement assistance, and a professional clothing closet.

There are no minimum education or work experience requirements for center services. When new customers enter JobLink, they may choose to go directly to the employment resource

center or meet with an intake counselor (the counselors see customers both by appointment and on a walk-in basis). Access to the employment resource center is unrestricted, while enrollment in training programs (both short and long-term) is prefaced by an intake interview and skills assessment. According to center surveys, most customers choose to visit the center based on the advice of friends and family members. The center does, however, also receive referrals from the Department of Social Services and Employment Security Commission.

JobLink customers include welfare participants (10 to 25 percent of all persons served) and dislocated workers, as well as employed individuals interested in changing jobs. The program serves few teenage parents.[3] According to the center director, welfare reform decreased the number of welfare participants who were eligible for JobLink's standard services. To address the needs of this population, in 1998 the center applied for and received a U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) welfare-to-work grant totaling $2.6 million. The center proposed to use these funds for Ladder to Success, a comprehensive welfare-to-work program designed to provide transitional assistance and facilitate economic self-sufficiency within the time limits imposed by welfare reform. The target population for the program includes both the hard-to-employ and long-term welfare dependent, with a special outreach effort (the Columbus County Fatherhood Initiative) that targets noncustodial fathers. Barriers to employment that characterize this population include a lack of high school education, basic skills, work ethic, child care, and transportation, as well as the presence of physical, emotional, or mental disabilities, substance abuse, legal problems, domestic violence, bad credit, and language and other cultural barriers.

Ladder to Success program components include intensive job readiness, job placement, post-employment, and job retention/support services (see Exhibit 1). Program staff have hired a contractor to provide participants with transportation to and from work,[4] and encourage employer involvement through company tax incentives, employability coaches, on-the-job and other post-employment training, financial assistance with training new employees, and pre-arranged child care for participants (JobLink, n.d.b).

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[3]Community colleges in North Carolina generally cannot serve students under 18 years of age. In order to enroll in a college program, high school students must obtain permission for dual enrollment or drop out of their secondary program.

[4]This contract is part of the JobLink Steering Committee's larger effort to plan an expanded transportation system for the county.

Exhibit 1. Ladder to Success: Program Components and Activities

Job Readiness	Job Placement	Post-Employment	Job Retention/ Support Service
• Intake • Assessment • Eligibility determination • Development of an individualized service strategy • case management	• wage subsidies to enhance job creation • on-the-job training • apprenticeships • internships • community service • work experience	• workplace literacy • basic skills training • occupational skills training • computer literacy training • employer-sponsored training • entrepreneurship training • referrals to vocational rehabilitation • training in job keeping and job coping	• employment coaches • peer mentoring • car loan program • substance abuse treatment • day care • transportation • college scholarships • individual development accounts

Adapted from Southeastern Community College, 1998, p. 2.

Resources

Within the Columbus County JobLink Career Center "staff are assigned by function rather than job title and operate as a team." Primary functions include administration, intake/counseling, instruction, job development, and recruitment (JobLink, n.d.c). SCC's Associate Dean of Continuing Education serves as the center director. The center's 17 other staff members include SCC employees as well as representatives from JTPA, JobReady, theEmployment Security Commission, Vocational Rehabilitation, WorkFirst, and the Telamon Corporation. Most staff members work full time at the center. When asked about staff needs, the center director indicated that a full-time transportation coordinator would greatly enhance JobLink services.

The center director explained that, in hiring JobLink staff, she looks for "people with a genuine interest in helping people but tempered with knowledge of the real work world." She added that she prefers "nontraditional instructors" and "people who know the county." All new center staff participate in an orientation that addresses the operation of the one-stop; staff members also receive a manual that describes center activities and community resources. All JobLink staff members have completed the Workforce Development Institute's Orientation to the One-Stop Concept and Program Overview cross-training sessions. The center director noted that staff participation in these sessions is important not only because of their content, but also because staff can learn about what other programs in the state are doing. Selected staff members

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have completed Creative Planning Solutions training (also conducted by the Workforce Development Institute) and Customer Satisfaction Focus Group training. Other professional development activities include participation in national, state, and local workshops, conferences, and meetings.

Internally, the center holds weekly staff meetings as well as monthly steering committee meetings (described earlier). The center also maintains three management teams to address issues in the areas of intake, assessment, and job development. As community college employees, all JobLink staff members participate in an annual performance evaluation. When asked about performance standards for staff members, the center director emphasized: "the center's programs have standards but not its persons; success is the responsibility of the group."

A variety of agencies contribute funding for center services. These agencies (and funding streams) include the Cape Fear Workforce Development Board (JTPA, Title IIA, IIC, and III; JobLink grant), North Carolina Community College System (JTPA, Human Resources Development, and Carl Perkins), Department of Administration (Displaced Homemakers), and Employment Security Commission (on-the-job training funds) (JobLink, 1996, p. 12). The center director noted that "all partners provide services in kind but not dollars." She explained that the college has borne the brunt of expenses associated with the one-stop in order to overcome partner agencies' hesitations about buying into the system. She quickly added, however, that eventually the various agencies will have to renegotiate their funding contributions.

Outcomes

The center director reported that, as part of the North Carolina JobLink System, the JobLink Career Center engages in a continuous cycle of evaluation and improvement. The center sets goals each year and, on a quarterly basis, center staff complete a status report that provides information on program outcomes, customers, and partner agencies, as well as a narrative describing major accomplishments and milestones. In addition to these ongoing activities, in Fall 1998 the North Carolina Department of Commerce commissioned an external examination of all of the state's JobLink Centers conducted by the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce and Strumpf Associates. Internally, the center uses JTPA evaluation measures, customer satisfaction surveys for all customers (each customer completes a survey after his or her first visit in the center; staff also send each customer a follow-up survey three months after this visit to gauge progress), participant tracking, and annual employer surveys to assess effectiveness.

In 1994-95, the Columbus County JobLink Career Center trained 693 customers, 71 percent of whom staff placed in employment and 27 percent in additional employment-related training. For this performance, the Center received the Governor's Award for Outstanding Training and Placement Program (November, 1995) (JobLink, n.d.c). The following year, the center placed 61 percent of its job readiness program participants in employment and 36 percent in another training program (Southeastern Community College, 1997, p. 10). That same year, the American Association for Women in Community Colleges granted the center one of three Model Program Awards. Most recently, in 1997, the American Association of Community Colleges and United States Department of Labor granted the center their Workforce Development Award ($10,000) for an Exemplary Program in One-Stop Center Career Services. Criteria for this award included high-quality information and services, customer choice, program integration, and accountability (JobLink, n.d.c).

According to the most recent quarterly status report, as of March 1999 the center served a total of 26,302 customers during the 1998 to 1999 program year. Of these customers, staff placed 1,434 in jobs and 3,866 in training programs; of the remaining customers, 3,398 utilized the career resource room while 14,404 received "other services." During this same period, a total of 4,413 employers placed a job order through the center (1,475 of these orders were filled), and 829 employers received "other services" through the center (JobLink, March 1999, p.1). Within the Ladder to Success program, staff reported that, as of the time of our research, they had received 101 referrals; of these, 70 customers were eligible for the program and 32 had been placed in employment. Anticipated program outcomes included a total of 300 participants (including 80 noncustodial parents) and 250 unsubsidized job placements (an 83 percent placement rate) at an average entry wage of $5.15 per hour and one-year after-placement wage of $6.00 per hour (Southeastern Community College, 1998).

The JobLink customers whom we interviewed praised the center staff ("they made me feel like I could do it") as well as the various support services offered through the center. One customer explained : "The challenge of waging off of welfare is getting it all together. Living on welfare is an addiction, a lifestyle. You get used to that way of life, but then you feel like you're selling out your self-esteem and your pride." In comparing her life before and after receiving services through JobLink, she added: "I feel human again. The biggest change is my self-confidence." A second customer reported: "I got my self-esteem back. Even my children look at me differently."

Implications

According to program staff, a variety of unique features define the Columbus County JobLink Career Center. These include:

- A holistic approach to meeting customer needs;
- An emphasis on the customer's interests and abilities;
- A variety of funding sources and financial assistance options;
- The availability of a variety of training programs including short-term, entry-level skills training;
- The integral involvement of dozens of local, regional, and state agencies; and
- The monitoring of feedback from employers and other customers and other outcome information (Southeastern Community College, 1997, pp. 15-16).

When asked what factors contribute most to the center's success, respondents emphasized staffing, approach, and partnerships. The Columbus County WorkFirst Supervisor described SCC as "one of many resources and one of the better resources," adding that the center is able to successfully move persons into the workforce because staff members "meet people where they are." The center director emphasized the benefits of the staff members' flexible approach to service provision, particularly their willingness to adjust services as dictated by customer needs. Other staff members agreed, and added that their various partners enable them to refer customers to those resources that the center itself does not provide, and, therein, facilitate success. SCC's Vice President of Continuing Education noted the particular importance of the center's longstanding partnerships with area employers, adding: "employers are receptive to hiring participants because the center has established a good track record." Respondents also associated a variety of benefits with the center's community college affiliation, including access to literacy programs, continuing education courses, and student development services. One respondent added: "The college location makes it more education than social service."

In reviewing lessons learned during the implementation and development of the center, staff members noted the need for flexibility, pointing out that services must continuously evolve to meet customers' changing needs. Staff members also noted the need for strong leadership, a willingness to confront resistance to change, and recognition that change takes time ("Everything – takes three times as long as expected. If related to computerization and technology, double

that.") (Southeastern Community College, 1997, p. 16). JobLink staff members suggested that other programs can benefit from being customer focused ("provide the customer with what they need when they need it") and collaborative ("establish good partnerships"), as well as from striving to increase their visibility within the community. The center director suggested that programs develop their collaborative relationships early on, emphasizing that "an atmosphere of collaboration leads to resources." The Manager of the Employment Security Commission added that it is important not to let "local politics" and "turfism" inhibit collaboration, and that ongoing communication and recognition of a common goal can overcome this barrier. The Vice President of Continuing Education suggested that programs "be honest — under promise and over develop," adding "if you get your foot in the door, then the program will sell itself." The JobLink Steering Committee emphasized the variety of issues that must be addressed before a program can successfully move persons from welfare to work, including retention, literacy, motivation, transportation, and collaboration. One committee member concluded: "Multiple barriers need to be addressed before you can place demands on individuals."

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Hospitality On-Site Training

Ohio Hotel and Lodging Association and
Ohio Department of Education,
Division of Career-Technical and Adult Education
Columbus and Dayton, Ohio

Overview

In spring 1996 individuals at the Ohio Hotel and Lodging Association and local and state education and social services agency staff and local postsecondary adult workforce education providers formed an advisory committee to design a program to provide people receiving public assistance with employment and training in the hospitality industry. The result of these efforts, the Hospitality On-Site Training (HOST) program, is a public/private partnership between the Ohio Hotel and Lodging Association, the Ohio Department of Education, Division of Vocational and Adult Education, Ohio Restaurant Association and, in the Columbus location, Columbus Public Schools, the Franklin County Department of Human Services, and the Eastland Joint Vocational School District. Partners in its second location in Dayton include the Greater Dayton Hotel and Lodging Association, Montgomery County Department of Human Services, The Job Center, and the Miami Valley Career and Technology Center.

Participants enter the nine-month, 30-hour per week training program as employees in the hospitality industry, thereby satisfying TANF work requirements. After two weeks in the classroom, they begin on-the-job training, returning to class once a week for job retention support. During the nine-month training period, participants are paid for 20 hours of work on the job. They are also paid for time spent attending class for (approximately 10 hours per week). In addition to training in industry skills and knowledge, the program emphasizes personal skills for job retention, such as work readiness and personal responsibility.

According to program materials, HOST addresses the hospitality industry's critical need for a trained labor force, given the shortage of workers in the area and the cost of transporting and housing employees from overseas. It "maximizes private and government resources" through cooperative fiscal, curricular, and personnel contributions, resulting in employment and training for TANF clients.

Context

State

The Ohio Department of Human Services (ODHS) and the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) originally supported training services for the JOBS program through a state interagency agreement. ODHS contributed the cost of tuition, assessment, job profiling, and an on-the-job training subsidy, and ODE paid a state subsidy to the schools for the HOST program through December 1997. After 1997, the state agency established a single consolidated funding allocation system that allows the state's 88 counties to make their own program, and resource decisions.

Welfare reform responsibilities devolved to the local level in 1997 through the passage of Ohio House Bill 408. The state law created two programs for counties to serve their needy families: (1) Ohio Works First — TANF cash assistance for individuals seeking employment and (2) the Prevention, Retention and Contingency (PRC) program — short-term assistance to serve low-income families who may or may not currently be Ohio Works First (TANF) clients. Ohio Works First requires TANF clients to work 30 hours per week, with a time limit of three years (although clients may reapply two years after benefits end if they have "good cause"). Clients must participate in job search activities and can receive training if it is "tied to work". The PRC program broadens public assistance services for the purpose of "encouraging participants to become, and remain, self-sufficient". In an April 1999 memorandum, the state DHS agency advised counties to shift their focus away from cash assistance and toward self-sufficiency because of declining caseloads, time limits, and available funds. "Fewer people need services," respondents said, "but the ones who are left are the difficult to place" who face multiple barriers, such as substance abuse and domestic violence. Regardless of declining caseloads, DHS staff added, "people are still in poverty. There are still people who need food stamps and Medicaid."

The state provides county DHS agencies with technical assistance and monitors their progress according to performance objectives outlined in partnership agreements with county boards of commissioners. ODHS requires counties to write policies defining eligibility and the application process with help from regional DHS account managers. The state was, at the time of the study, drafting reporting requirements that would encompass PRC services. Also in its technical assistance role, ODHS implements an Integrated Case Management System so that county workers can access statewide automated systems. The ODHS director noted that welfare reform is not DHS' only responsibility. In addition to TANF-related duties, the DHS agencies

administer child support enforcement, foster care, adoption services, protective care, child care, and food stamps. The state DHS agency also administers Medicaid, its largest program.

Other state agencies, in addition to DHS, contribute to work development in Ohio. The Ohio Bureau of Employment Services (OBES) currently administers the state's One-Stop Career Center System, a mechanism for linking employers and workers.[1] The Governor initiated a merger of OBES with DHS in order to create a single, statewide workforce development system. The "Department of Job and Family Services" will serve both employers and job seekers, integrate services, and give more local flexibility across programs. According to materials from the state TANF agency, the DHS director noted that the proposed merger is consistent with the requirements of the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA).

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE), Division of Career-Technical and Adult Education, is also very involved in developing and improving the state's workforce and workplace productivity. Local public school systems provide career-technical education services in each county. According to ODE materials, "postsecondary adult workforce education supports Ohio's high performance workplace with quality education and training programs and services that provide a return on investment to individuals, employers, agencies and customers of the adult workforce education system." Prior to welfare reform and the devolution of responsibility to counties in 1997, local adult workforce education providers offered comprehensive assessment, skill training, and Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE) through a JOBS state interagency agreement between ODHS and ODE. Counties now arrange for services at the local level and may or may not contract with education agencies. The Adult Workforce Education Consultant commented that local authority has created much variation in service delivery across the state. "Services people receive through our education providers depend on the county," she said. A statewide network of adult Full-Service Centers has been in operation for 10 years. ODE reports state that, "Ohio's 40 adult workforce education Full-Service Centers provide high-quality training that fuels workforce productivity. Accessible from any part of the state, Full-Service Centers offer a variety of courses and services to business and industry interested in improving workplace productivity." Additional customers include government, associations, and organizations, and participants in OBES' One-Stop Career Center System. The Centers assist several welfare-to-work programs, including HOST.

[1]Respondents noted that state funds, rather than U.S. Department of Labor funds, support Ohio's one-stops.

At the state level, ODE's Division of Career-Technical and Adult Education provides technical assistance to local programs "focused on teaching and learning," according to the division director. Efforts include assistance with the HOST program, as well as information dissemination about recommended practices such as career-focused education and integrated technical and academic competencies. In addition to these services, the state education department provides quality enhancement grants to the centers for developing new programs and expanding services.

According to ODHS and ODE publications, welfare reform has led to significant progress in Ohio. Efforts have decreased Ohio's cash assistance caseload by 25 percent since February 1998, and by 62 percent since welfare's peak in 1991. Materials state that "welfare-to-work has removed 580,000 people from welfare's rolls and saved the state $1.8 billion." ODHS contracted with an independent research firm in October 1998 to conduct a five-year evaluation of its TANF program. In addition to determining how well Works First helps participants achieve self-sufficiency, the evaluation will address administration and organizational issues. ODHS also contracted with Ohio State University researchers to survey families who leave public assistance programs. The agency is also piloting a system that tracks client participation in TANF over the years, including entry-level employment and mobility, in order to compare TANF clients' progress with the non-TANF working population.

Local

Counties decide which programs, services, and expenditures (one-time-only cash payments) families need in order to expedite their departure from, or prevent their return to, the Ohio Works First cash assistance rolls. The change to local responsibility has created a "potpourri" of programs and services, respondents said, because counties are so diverse. Some have few clients and transportation barriers that inhibit program participation. Other counties lack experience with service delivery systems and are ill-equipped for complex administrative responsibilities.

County Works First and PRC services include training and job placement, transportation, emergency assistance, and child protective services. Counties may offer such training services as comprehensive vocational and aptitude assessments, drug screening for employers, job readiness training, job club, and employer-specific occupational training. Employment support services include job coaching and retention counseling, and job development services may involve job

fairs and automated data banks of job openings, applicants, and referral matching. Some counties assist with job-related expenses such as training fees and special tools or clothing; some provide transportation assistance to include help with obtaining a car or a driver's license, or arranging other travel to work.

Organizational Structure

HOST is a public/private partnership that involves state and county welfare and education agencies, postsecondary adult workforce education institutions, and the hospitality industry. Partners participate in advisory committees in Columbus and in Dayton to oversee program development and maintenance. According to program materials, committee responsibilities include working together to:

- establish standards and curricula,
- oversee incorporation of national skills standards and industry curriculum and certification,
- assist with securing resources to fund program operation, establish instructor qualifications,
- establish participating employers,
- identify work sites and placement opportunities,
- identify and oversee coaches and mentors,
- provide training equipment,
- assist with participant recruitment,
- assist with participant evaluations,
- evaluate the program, and
- promote the program partnership.

Local human services agencies recruit HOST participants; reimburse for assessment, testing, and tuition; provide on-the-job training funds to employers; and assist with child care and transportation. Education partners provide the HOST instructor and work site coordinator; develop curricula; conduct training for employer personnel; and provide comprehensive assessment, testing, Work Keys, and post-employment support services.

In addition to hiring participants, employers provide work sites and work site liaisons, wages for each participant for 30 hours per week (starting at over $5.00 per hour, with a

minimum of $700 per month gross wages for nine months); facilities and equipment; and participant support such as bus passes, uniforms, and shoes. Among HOST employers are Crowne Plaza, Holiday Inn, Hyatt, Marriott, and Westin hotels. Program administrators and partners have also recruited some restaurants to employ TANF clients as part of the HOST program.

Respondents emphasized that employers are not just involved, they drive the HOST program. The executive vice president of the Ohio Hotel and Lodging Association reportedly initiated HOST by approaching the state career-technical education agency about starting a welfare-to-work program to bring employees to the field. When asked what led him to ODE, the association vice president said he himself had participated in vocational education while in school, and that he was aware of the ODE's career-technical education division conferences that took place at the Crowne Plaza. He recruited other industry partners who worked with vocational educators and human service agencies to develop curricula and participation requirements. Hotel managers met with instructors, the Adult Workforce Education Consultant, and DHS staff to create a list of areas to address during training and criteria for selecting applicants. HOST has saved Marriot a lot of money, the employer in Dayton noted, by screening applicants through its assessment process and providing drug testing.

Respondents agreed that employers, including those in leadership positions, have "kept the program going." DHS staff noted that it was critical for the top-level administrators in the hospitality business to "buy into" the program and to stay in contact. "If there's a concern," one DHS staff person noted, "the general manager calls me – not the housekeeping supervisor, but the general manager." "One thing we try to recognize," a hotel manager who has been with the Columbus program for three years said, is that participants "can progress." HOST "lays a foundation" on which employers can base further development. "It is a win-win situation — it has benefits for both business and education."

The hospitality industry is particularly fruitful for welfare-to-work efforts, the Adult Workforce Education Consultant said, because there are "plenty of jobs" in the area, from entry-level to management positions. "A worker with the spirit of hospitality and the desire to serve others can work his or her way to the top" in this business, according to a HOST brochure. The hotels' top managers make presentations at job fairs and talk about how they started out in the business washing dishes, which is inspiring to TANF clients, the consultant added.

Although the various public and private partners were intensely involved in program development, Columbus' committee tends to meet less frequently now that the program has been underway for several years, according to the Adult Workforce Education Consultant. Also, some of the players have changed since the program's inception. Some new hotel managers are involved, and a few industry partners "dropped out." The Adult Workforce Education Consultant continues to work with other counties that are interested in replicating the HOST model. She emphasized that the cross-system approach is essential to the program's success and that committees must meet the membership and responsibility guidelines materials describe. In fact, last year the consultant advised a group in another city against starting a program because one agency seemed to dominate the effort. Since then, the group has begun to develop more effective partnerships and may soon be ready to replicate the model. Forming the advisory committee is the first step in the replication process; the committee can then select sites, an instructor, and students to begin a class.

The consultant emphasized that the advisory committee is critical to program development and continuation. "If you conceptualize the HOST program as a pyramid, the advisory committee is the base of the pyramid. The committee is the foundation." She explained, "The key to the program is that it is employer-driven," and employers drive the program through their involvement on the advisory committee. These employers hire participants — prior to program entry — and pay them wages while they attend HOST.

Although businesses are new partners, an interagency approach to social services was not new to Ohio. A variety of agencies contributed to JOBS in the early 1990s, creating cross-agency relationships between DHS, ODE, Drug and Alcohol, and other agencies at the state and local levels. Education has always been a player and "schools expect to be involved," she said, but all the agencies must make the effort to maintain existing relationships and build new ones. DHS staff added that businesses are the new partners, and that WIA creates an "even bigger push" to link with private industry.

Services

HOST serves TANF clients, many of whom may not have earned a high school diploma or GED. Respondents said that participant demographics are typical of the TANF population:

predominantly women who are 20-40 years of age. For example, 20 women and two men, ranging in age from 20 to 40 years, constituted the class in Dayton.

Service agencies, typically the local DHS, refer clients to the HOST program. DHS staff said that they identify TANF clients who are interested in working in the hospitality industry during the initial job search activities in which all Works First clients must participate. "We talk to them, find out what they want to do, and push them" to challenge themselves in a training program. The Adult Workforce Education Consultant noted that HOST is "looking to open the program to others." While some referrals have come from vocational rehabilitation and The Job Bank, these instances were limited. HOST would like to serve a broader population group, according to the consultant.

After an agency refers clients to HOST, education partners evaluate their skills using multiple tools. For the program in Dayton, for example, the Miami Valley Career Technology Center (CTC) administers the Work Keys assessment (developed using the American College Testing's (ACT's) Work Keys system of job profiling and skills assessment), the Customer Service Skills Inventory, a Following Oral Directions assessment, and a Personal Problem Checklist for each applicant to the Dayton program. Staff also give the Work Keys Applied Math assessment to applicants who express interest in working a hotel's front desk.

Respondents explained that local adult workforce educators developed the Work Keys evaluation tool specific to jobs in the hospitality industry for HOST. Educators met with people who do hospitality work, including housekeepers, utility stewards, front desk clerks, and human resource professionals. The workers listed the tasks their jobs entail, matching tasks with the necessary skills and levels of competence required to perform their work. Through this process, the educators established the appropriate level of performance for each task associated with hospitality jobs. These levels provide the basis for assessing work-related skills in the areas of "reading for information," "applied mathematics," and "locating information." HOST staff compare applicants' test scores in these areas with the targeted Work Keys scores for a specific occupational position to judge whether an applicant is likely to succeed in that position. Work Keys and job profiling are some of the specialized services that Adult Full-Service Centers provide across the state.

Clients who match or demonstrate an aptitude for targeted occupational skills interview with potential employers during a quarterly "job fair." TANF clients must apply for, and obtain, employment with participating industry partners before they begin training. The nine-month

program involves 30 hours of participation per week, thus meeting the TANF requirements for work. Participants are hired before they begin the program and receive wages even during the first two weeks of the program, which are spent entirely in the classroom. The Adult Workforce Education Consultant pointed out that this aspect is what separates HOST from other job-training programs. That employers hire participants prior to program entry and pay them to attend HOST for two weeks is a particularly "unique" approach to welfare-to-work, she explained. After those two weeks, participants begin on-the-job training with their employers. Participants return to the classroom once per week during the remainder of the nine-month period to continue to develop and reinforce work readiness skills. Instructors address interpersonal and interpersonal communication, goal setting, time management, crisis management, and problem solving. During these "follow-up services," participants can bring issues to the table, consider options for solving problems, and address and resolve conflicts "before they get too large to handle." Instructors also work with individual participants and their supervisors to help "ensure a successful transition" from welfare to work.

In the HOST classroom in Columbus we observed, for example, three participants were engaged in a discussion that involved decisions on the job. Walls displayed posters related to success and destiny themes. The instructor presented a decision matrix in front of the class with four quadrants labeled "ignore," "report," "approach," and "extort." He posed problem questions, verbally, such as "What would you do if a co-worker comes to the job smelling of alcohol?" Participants actively discussed options for handling the situation, including whether or not they would ignore the problem, report it to a supervisor, or use the information against their co-worker. The instructor interjected additional information to complicate the hypothetical decision, such as, "What if the person in question is a manager? What if the person is a friend?" Participants responded by relating some of their own experiences that were analogous to the situation.

Job-specific training prepares participants for several types of work in hospitality, such as front desk clerk, switchboard operator, housekeeper, convention server, and cook. Respondents said that participants can "cross train" to increase work options. Such "mobility" reportedly helps employees stay on the job. Instructors use a variety of materials, including a "generic hospitality curriculum" resource, plus newspaper articles, handouts, and videotapes. The Columbus instructor said that he "continually changes and improves the curriculum."

The program offers four classes within a year, staff said, although this number of classes "stretches capacity." "We try to run the program quarterly, with multiple start dates, because we want to get people out there," they explained. About 15 clients enroll per class. HOST holds a graduation ceremony upon the completion of each class. Graduates receive plaques that commemorate program completion and a "high profile" member of the community gives the keynote address. During the site visit, for example, the county common pleas court judge was the keynote speaker.

Classes take place at the Columbus Convention Center for the Columbus location. The classroom is set up to mimic a hotel meeting room, with skirted tables and pitchers of water. The Hyatt Hotels donate the space. In Dayton, classes are provided at The Job Center, which is part of the state's one-stop employment and training system. The facility is large and diverse: eight and a half acres of space housing 47 private and public agencies and 650 personnel, according to its brochure. In addition to the HOST classroom, the space houses the local DHS, its employment units and caseworkers, the community-wide case management system, plus a job seeker database that lists openings throughout the state, making The Job Center "a single point of contact" for employment services. As a "one-stop," the center serves both employers and potential employees by offering job fairs and customized training. Other agencies at the Job Center include the Miami Valley Career Technology Center, an Adult Full-Service Center; Clothes that Work, which helps men and women dress for job interviews with previously worn career clothes; an adult basic education computer lab that is part of the Dayton Public Schools; a Fast Track employment skills training program, part of the St. Vincent de Paul Society; DHS food stamp and HUD programs; planned parenthood, and Sinclair Community College. The Center also houses a video conferencing facility that can link all 88 counties.

The Job Center location is particularly convenient for clients not only because of the multiple service agencies available, respondents said, but also because the center is on several public bus routes and provides child care on site. Staff can "walk clients down the hall" to acquire services they need, and the center uses a common intake form to facilitate referrals. Respondents in Dayton noted that their county was "the first in the state to have a one-stop."

Resources

A "layering of resources," from various agencies and organizations, supports HOST. County DHS agencies reimburse local education agencies for assessment and tuition, and provide an on-the-job training subsidy, the amount determined locally, to employers. Other agencies that refer participants to HOST, such as vocational rehabilitation, reimburse tuition for their clients. Local schools provide the instructors; The Job Club in Dayton and the Ohio Hotel and Lodging Association contribute space and materials. Employers pay wages to participants throughout the program. DHS also assists HOST participants with child care and transportation costs.

Respondents listed tuition for the HOST program as $1500 per participant in Columbus, and $1200 per participant in Dayton. The Adult Workforce Education Consultant commented that the cost for HOST is lower than many adult education programs, and fits DHS' need for training within TANF time limits.. She said that in the past, training and education service costs required several sources to contribute funds to a participant's program, including JTPA, DHS, Pell grants, and student loans. By keeping the cost at or under $1500 for HOST, DHS can reimburse fully and participants need not apply for other funds.

ODHS agency respondents commented that they are no longer involved in payment now that counties control services, replacing statewide contracts with local contracts. When payment came from the "state pocket," however, auditors could monitor spending and identify problems, allowing the state to provide some "quality control." "There are pluses and minuses" with local versus state funding, according to the Adult Workforce Education Consultant. Advantages are that "everyone is on the same page and everyone gets the same amount." Disadvantages are that counties now "try to do it all on their own," without the identification that comes with being part of a larger organization.

In terms of staffing, HOST instructors are certified teachers employed with the public school system. In addition, both of the HOST instructors were previously employed in the hospitality industry. Staff and partners agreed that this experience increases instructors' effectiveness in developing and transferring participants' work skills to the job. Previous experience in the industry also helps instructors develop and maintain relationships with employers and their staff, including hotel managers, supervisors, and human resource directors. The "networking," according to the Dayton instructor, creates a "person-to-person" approach, without which other hotel employees might negatively associate the client with an agency or bureaucracy.

Respondents commented that the position of instructor is demanding in the HOST program. The role requires "innovative" approaches to teaching and learning that often take place outside the classroom. Employers call instructors and instructors go on the job site to intervene if there is a problem. "Even after graduation," the Adult Workforce Education Consultant said, HOST participants communicate with instructors, sometimes seeking advice or encouragement. HOST originally intended for worksite job coaches to provide on-the-job training and mentoring. Respondents said that it has been difficult for supervisors to mentor subordinates, however; therefore, staff plan to develop mentoring among HOST graduates.

The Adult Workforce Education Consultant described her role as "doing public relations." She helps "connect" the partners, and "sells the HOST model" to others.

Outcomes

Instructors keep informal track of participants, graduates, and their progress. HOST in Columbus has served over 130 participants in seven classes. Almost half (60) of HOST's graduates have made advancements in terms of raises and promotions and more than half (70 percent) are still on the job with the employers who hired them. Others, the consultant noted, changed jobs, but the majority have remained in the hospitality industry, albeit not with their original employers. The Dayton program had graduated its first class, with 22 participants, at the time of the study. In general, most participants finish HOST. The completion rate increased, respondents said, as the assessment process improved for screening applicants. "HOST sets records for client attendance," DHS staff noted.

According to the employer who helped conceptualize this program, HOST produces "loyal, long-term" employees, and employers are invested in graduates, having sponsored nine months of training. He added that HOST has increased employer sensitivity and responsiveness to issues that keep workers from work, such as transportation and child care. Some respondents said that HOST has "created a common ground across hotels" and helped to "integrate the community." Employers talk to one another, comparing notes and promoting HOST. "We are learning to be more flexible," the employer said, adding that further improvements might include increased options for workers, such as job sharing for single parents.

HOST graduates described their own outcomes in terms of employment and personal growth. One graduate said she entered the program with little hope for employment and is now

hired and trained to work as both front desk clerk and switchboard operator. She "cross-trained" in order to keep her options open for the different positions that become available in hotels. Another participant came to HOST with no experience and within two months was able to achieve her goal of working as a cook. "I'm not the same person I was when I started this program," she commented. "You can get used to being on the system. I needed a push."

National associations have recognized the success of the HOST program. In 1998, the program won awards for excellence from the National Association of State Directors of Vocational Technical Education Consortium, the American Vocational Association, and the American Society of Association Executives.

Implications

HOST works, according to staff, because of intensive classroom training "up front," employment support services, the instructor's role as an "ombudsman facilitator," and the peer network. With these features, HOST "picks up where the system leaves off," according to its brochure, "going beyond the much over-simplified formula" of job placement as the one solution to welfare reform. Instead, HOST "breaks the cycle of recidivism" by helping participants build "life coping skills" that address chronic problems and handle the crises that contribute to job loss and a return to welfare. The Ohio Hotel and Lodging Association vice president reiterated that HOST participants learn how to budget money, manage credit, shop at the right stores, do long-range planning, manage parenting, and hold their tempers on the job. They see fellow participants get raises and promotions. Graduates attributed their success on the job to instructor and peer support, which gave them confidence and increased their motivation to succeed. One employer added that the nine months of support, gives workers a boost toward completing a year of employment and "once we get them for a year, they're ours forever."

The client selection process — "pulling the right people for the program" — also contributes to HOST's success. Careful identification, referral, and assessment increase the likelihood that participants will do well in the hospitality industry. Some DHS staff and employers noted that they have been "creaming" clients for HOST, however, and that the service system must develop training opportunities for people with employment barriers such as learning disabilities and criminal records. Other respondents said that DHS staff could refer more clients to HOST but, instead, continue to "push Work First."

Respondents did agree that participants "need a menu of options." "There is still 'a gap,' " the Adult Workforce Education Consultant said, because of DHS' "work first" philosophy. "In the days of JOBS, the DHS emphasis was on training." While there are a variety of short-term and long-term training opportunities available, DHS now tends to put clients to work, rather than send them to training. "DHS needs to recognize the HOST model as a work first option," she added. Adult Basic Literacy and Education is also a strategy for linking clients with work, she noted, but new needs are always emerging and, for clients in transition, Adult Basic and Literacy Education may not be enough. She concluded that working with companies and training institutions helps provide a comprehensive set of opportunities for training, skill building, and work.

Instructors echoed the need for a range of services for participants, cautioning that each client is different and should be treated as an individual. "You can't assume they all have the same problem," the Columbus instructor said. Instructors try to individualize their efforts by talking "one on one" with each participants about their specific needs and about other services that may meet those needs. DHS staff added that clients can have different problems on different days and "need a list of solutions and back up systems" to address family and work-related challenges.

HOST's cross-system approach, involving private employers and public service agencies, strengthens the program's ability to serve participants. Working together "we make more impact than could any one system alone," respondents said. "HOST is a common focus," a respondent explained, among "creative people" with various expertise to contribute who "believe the program works."

Respondents also said "you need a champion" to make a program such as HOST successful. Key leaders for HOST were the former state career-technical education associate director and the Ohio Hotel and Lodging Association's executive vice president. Both had the clout, the authority, and access to publicity, to "get the program off the ground." The Ohio Hotel and Lodging Association's executive vice president remains closely involved with HOST in Columbus, continues to promote the program, and often performs as master of ceremonies at graduation. He commented that the HOST model should not be limited to the hospitality industry. Any advocacy group or nonprofit organization, he explained, could provide leadership in helping the "unemployed get employed" through peer support, instruction based on real problems participants encounter on the job, and life skill development.

HOST's success has inspired others, respondents said. The state's larger counties are interested in replicating the model after observing the program develop and grow in Columbus. "Columbus gave us something to feed off of," program developers explained in Dayton and noted that the Adult Workforce Education Consultant who assists with HOST is "a good cheerleader." With the new Dayton program underway, the Adult Workforce Education Consultant is optimistic that HOST will continue to grow.

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NEW Choices

Goodwill Industries of North Georgia, Inc.
Atlanta, Georgia

Overview

The *NEW* (Nontraditional Employment for Women) *Choices* program operated by Goodwill Industries of North Georgia prepares low-income females with employment barriers for nontraditional careers in the construction and building trades industry. Students in NEW Choices receive vocational skills, job readiness, and life skills training; instruction in trades math; physical conditioning; and job placement and other pre- and post-employment support services. Staff members from NEW Choices work closely with representatives from a variety of state and local agencies, community-based organizations, and businesses and industries in the metro Atlanta area to provide these services. Since its inception in 1995, NEW Choices has served 248 students, of whom 211 (85 percent) graduated. Of these graduates, program staff placed 187 (89 percent) at an average entry-level wage of $8.15 per hour. In addition to skills, certification, and employment, students reported that the program provides them with enhanced self-esteem and makes them aware that "there are no limitations." Respondents attributed the success of NEW Choices to its "holistic and comprehensive" design and enthusiastic staff, as well as to peer support among program participants.

Context

Georgia's legislature responded to the mandates of federal welfare reform legislation under Senate Bill 104, "the centerpiece of the state's welfare reform efforts" (Georgia Department of Human Resources, 1999d). As of June 1998, Georgia had 191,214 TANF recipients (73,827 families); between January 1997 and June 1998, the number of families receiving cash assistance decreased by 35.8 percent. The state's TANF budget for fiscal year 1998 totaled $296.1 million, $68.1 million of which were state funds (Georgia Department of Human Resources, 1999c).

According to the Georgia State Plan for Welfare-to-Work Formula Grants (Fiscal Year 1998): "The state priority for Welfare-to-Work services is TANF customers who have been on the rolls 30 months or longer." As of July 1997, 65 percent of Georgia's TANF population had

received cash assistance for 30 or more months, and almost 30 percent had received cash assistance for more than 60 months. In addition, 15 percent of this population had never held a job longer than three months (Georgia Department of Labor, 1998). Through its welfare reform legislation, Georgia implemented the following restrictions:

- TANF recipients are limited to 48 months of assistance (compared to the federal limit of 60 months);
- a family of three may qualify for TANF benefits if their income is below $513 a month and assets are worth less than $1,000;
- all TANF recipients with a child over the age of one year must participate in a work activity;
- work activities include on-the-job training, work experience placements (limited to six months), and community service — secondary and postsecondary education do not count as work activities;
- teen parents who receive TANF must live with a parent or responsible relative and stay in school; and
- recipients who have an additional child after 10 months on TANF do not receive an increase in cash assistance.

(Georgia Department of Human Resources, 1999a, 1999b, 1999d).

Georgia's Department of Labor (DOL) has lead responsibility for the oversight and monitoring of the state's welfare-to-work system. State monitoring activities examine wage levels and job retention as well as the percentage of persons leaving the TANF rolls. Through the Team:WORK Collaborative (formalized in July 1997), the DOL works closely with the Department of Human Resources (DHR) and the Department of Technical and Adult Education (DTAE). According to state reports, "DHR provides case management to those who need it, DTAE is the primary resource for training, and DOL takes the lead in job development and job placement" (Georgia Department of Human Resources, 1999d). In addition to service provision, all three agencies contribute substantial funds (millions of dollars per year) to the collaborative. At the local level, Private Industry Councils (PICs) (which include representatives from public education, public assistance, rehabilitation services, employment services, economic development, organized labor, and community based organizations):

- determine the extent to which on-the-job training and work experience and community service placements will be offered as work activities;

- identify service needs (including job readiness, placement, post-employment, and support services) and contract to procure them;
- define relationships between local agencies and their collaborative partners; and
- determine and manage monitoring activities.

The state channels all local welfare-to-work funds through the PIC's, allocating monies based on the percentages of persons in poverty, long-term welfare recipients, and unemployed persons in each PIC's service area (Georgia Department of Labor, 1998).

Georgia provides welfare-to-work services through its "workfirst!" program (established January 1996). In addition to providing income assistance, workfirst! incorporates training and education elements (formerly offered through the state Department of Family and Child Services' PEACH program) as well as assistance in removing other common barriers to employment (including lack of child care, health care, and transportation). The program uses a three-tiered service model that includes a comprehensive assessment process (this process examines academic skills; job interests, aptitude, and skills; education and job history; employment goals and financial needs; and physical and mental health and other needs) to place customers in one of three levels of job readiness (see Attachment 1). According to the Georgia State Plan for Welfare-to-Work Formula Grants (Fiscal Year 1998), services at the local level place "major emphasis . . . on post-employment and retention services, as well as combining work activities with education and training, to ensure long-term success and self-sufficiency."

In addition to direct service provision, Georgia offers subsidized training and tax credits to businesses that hire welfare recipients; participating businesses receive the recipient's check for nine months to offset the cost of wages and may receive a tax credit for the provision of training or child care (Georgia Department of Human Resources, 1999a). Other state programs that support Georgia's welfare reform efforts include "ParentHood It's a Man's Thing, Too" ("a major initiative to teach young men how to be more knowledgeable and responsible parents") and *Teen Plus* ("an interdivisional office that coordinates all DHR teen pregnancy prevention efforts") (Georgia Department of Human Resources, 1999d). In addition, "a statewide transportation plan has been developed by the Department of Human Resources to increase the availability of flexible, efficient, cost effective and quality transportation services needed by customers in order to achieve self-sufficiency . . . . PIC's will join the local collaborative charged

with developing a regional transportation system to address the needs of welfare-to-work customers" (Georgia Department of Labor, 1998).

Staff members at NEW Choices reported that, for programs within the state of Georgia, "figuring out whether or not you're meeting the criteria for TANF is really difficult and not consistent." According to the program's retention coordinator, the state granted autonomy to its 158 counties in terms of interpreting state welfare-to-work legislation "and then there's so many different interpretations that if you're dealing with multiple counties you're just up a creek." She added: "We needed to know if we had to make adjustments in this program [to be able to continue to serve welfare participants under TANF] . . . but we still, no matter who we talk to, are wholly unable to find out what the requirements are." Presently, according to the program manager, "it comes down to having those personal relationships so they [referral sources] know what we do. They know that we're a good program."

While a few staff members noted that welfare reform has had some positive effects (such as encouraging government agencies to view welfare recipients as "customers" versus "clients" and fostering increased interagency collaboration and more comprehensive service provision), most cited a variety of shortcomings with the current federal and state legislation and its origin. The program case manager stated: "The politicians never came to the service providers who actually interacted with the clients and it became a political soapbox . . . . We ended up warehousing people just to make it look good on paper." The retention coordinator agreed, adding:

> I don't think we know how many kids are staying home with no parental supervision or what the impact of that's going to be. I don't think we know what the impact of being forced into work and not having health insurance is going to be. At the same time, they're tearing down public housing and there's getting to be less low-income housing. . . . Generally, for most people, it's better to work than to not work for self-esteem; however, I don't know if most people are going into situations where their self-esteem is being improved.

The program manager emphasized the negative effects of viewing training as an option after someone enters the workforce and fails, noting that, ultimately, "vocational education has been left out of the mix." She added, "the other piece is that attitude of 'any job is a good job' and that's not true." She foresees "a larger pool of working poor" and "a lot of individuals that fall between the cracks," given the current legislation.

Organizational Structure

NEW Choices is one of hundreds of community-based employment and vocational training programs offered throughout the United States and abroad by Goodwill Industries; in 1996, these programs served over 204,000 individuals. Goodwill supports these programs through revenues from its retail stores and contract services, as well as federal, state, and other grants. Within Goodwill Industries of North Georgia, NEW Choices is one of several programs offered through the Economic Development Group, a branch of the Employment and Training Department. The facility that houses NEW Choices also houses other Goodwill programs, including Work Connections (a one-stop employment center), other job training programs, GED instruction, and a retail shop. The project manager reported that, in exchange for Goodwill's support, NEW Choices provides its parent organization with recognition (in that it is a nationally acclaimed welfare-to-work program) as well as established relationships with public agencies that new Goodwill programs can build on.

According to the program manager, the impetus to implement a nontraditional training program in the metro Atlanta area came from one of Goodwill's Vice Presidents, who observed the positive impacts of a similar program in another part of the country. Goodwill staff members undertook several steps prior to implementing the program to ensure its success. First, a community development staff person researched the market needs of the service area and the best practices that could be used to meet those needs. In addition, Goodwill staff members visited several nontraditional programs and, according to the program manager, "took the best from the best and made something even better." These staff members also organized a leadership team that included industry professionals (from area businesses, trades organizations, and unions), training specialists, and social service providers. The leadership team assisted Goodwill staff in designing the curriculum and developing an implementation strategy "based on the needs of the industry and based on the participants that we serve" (program manager). The program manager emphasized the importance of this approach, noting that a new program needs to have accurate background information as well as buy-in from the community.

Goodwill of North Georgia, Inc., continues to partner with a variety of organizations in its provision of NEW Choices. Area employers and industry associations provide guest speakers, donate equipment, and furnish employment information and opportunities. Representatives from business and industry also serve as members of NEW Choices' Employer Advisory Council (EAC), which meets quarterly for the purpose of helping staff ensure that the program's

curriculum and activities continue to meet employer needs. The Departments of Rehabilitation Services and Family and Child Services, as well as a number of community-based organizations, provide referrals to and accept referrals from the program. These partners also provide program support services, including funding for child care and transportation. Habitat for Humanity provides students with opportunities for hands-on work experience (described in more detail under Services); in return, the organization has a steady pool of qualified volunteers to assist with its home building projects.

The program manager described these various collaborative relationships as "pretty solid," noting that this dynamic is strengthened by her staff's emphasis on the notion that "we're all here to serve the consumer." Staff members did note, however, that working with local government agencies was "difficult" and cited red tape and poor internal communications as sources of aggravation. The retention coordinator added: "Since all this welfare to work, all of a sudden everybody is supposed to be accountable and what accountability means to all these bureaucrats is paper . . . . Our job is train, that's what we are supposed to do. And we are not supposed to be pushing paper all the time. If we are, we will not succeed in doing what we are supposed to do."

Services

NEW Choices targets low-income women with employment barriers seeking careers in the construction and building trades industry. The program serves females ages 16 and older (its enrollees to date range from 16 to 50 years of age) from the metro Atlanta area (this area includes Fulton, Dekalb, and other counties as well as the city of Atlanta). Approximately half of the students are TANF recipients and most are African American.

To recruit applicants, staff distribute flyers and place public service announcements and advertisements. Program information is also available via a telephone hotline; the hotline encourages all callers to leave their name and number and a staff member returns calls daily, providing a "personal approach" to recruitment. According to the program manager, however, their most effective recruitment tool is their pool of former students. The program hires graduates to distribute materials and speak to both potential applicants and service providers about the program. The program manager explained that the graduates provide a more intimate connection for prospective students than a staff member would ("It's one thing for me to go — I

represent a program"), and that the graduates enable service providers to observe the impact of the program ("They actually get to see success").

Program staff offer a NEW Choices information session and facility tour weekly. During this session, applicants complete a self-assessment to determine whether their occupational goals coincide with jobs in the construction and building trades industry (applicants do not, however, need to have prior experience in the industry). According to the case manager, applicants who are not appropriate for the program are those with career aspirations outside of the building and trades industry (e.g., aspiring computer operators) as well as individuals who have "idealized what the industry is about, not realizing that there are nontraditional hours, you may get dirty, and there are down periods." The case manager added that, in some cases, applicants are curious about the program "but their life needs are greater than their training needs."

Applicants must provide proof of residence in the metro Atlanta area and pass a medical screen (to ensure that they are physically capable of entering the industry). A high school diploma or GED certificate is "preferred but not required." The program manager explained: "We used to have it as a requirement because most employers did, but we dropped that because of welfare-to-work requirements (i.e., staff waived the high school diploma requirement to open the program up to the hardest-to-serve population) and because we know there are a lot of employees out there that cannot read or write that are male and are making money." She quickly added: "But we also want to make sure that a woman knows that that should not be enough for her, that she needs to go ahead and hook up and get her GED, get her further education, whatever she needs to advance."

All applicants meet with the program case manager, who assesses barriers to program participation and success and connects applicants with community resources. Common barriers reported by staff members and students included child care, transportation, the absence of a family support system, single-parenting, domestic abuse, addiction, and homelessness. A number of program staff members emphasized that *all* program applicants receive assessment services and referrals, regardless of whether or not they are eligible for or enroll in the program.

NEW Choices prepares women for jobs in the construction and building trades industry including carpentry, drywall, electrical work, framing, glass installation, heavy equipment operation, highway construction, painting, plumbing, siding, tiling, and building maintenance. According to respondents, one of the most unique aspects of the program is its emphasis on training all students in all of the above skill areas (versus requiring each student to select a

particular occupation on which to focus). Students with specialized interests may receive supplemental instruction, but all students must master skills that represent the range of talents required to succeed in a job in the construction and building trades industry. The program manager explained: "We feel it's real important for them to get the general broad exposure . . . . It is also a team building exercise." A student commented: "This is basic knowledge that gets us in the door . . . . When we have a job they'll train us more in that specific field."

Students in NEW Choices attend training 40 hours per week for 11 weeks. During that time they master six core program components: vocational skills training, physical conditioning, trades math, women in the trades, job readiness, and survival skills for women. (We describe each of these components in more detail below.) Class members participate in all six components as a group; the program serves one class of approximately 20 students in any given 11-week period. The program manager noted that basic literacy is threaded throughout the curriculum (e.g., the trades math class focuses on word problems; students in the job readiness class prepare and present trade reports).

The vocational skills training class begins with an emphasis on job safety, tool identification, and blueprint reading and design. Students spend at least 25 hours each week applying their skills in "the shop," an expansive warehouse filled with specialized work stations (e.g., plumbing, electricity, painting), equipment, and consumable supplies. Hands-on building projects include designing and constructing a 30' x 30' cut-away of a house complete with windows, electricity, plumbing, and decor. Students work in teams to develop blueprints and the class selects and builds one of the houses. Students must also break down, repair, and rebuild major home fixtures (such as sinks and toilets) in the maintenance repair area and receive in-depth "personalized training" in their area of choice. The students also dedicate one full day each week to assisting with the construction of Habitat for Humanity homes where they learn skills such as roofing and siding. All students are pre- and post-tested on tool identification and observed for the development of hands-on skills.

An exercise physiologist directs the physical conditioning class whose purpose is to improve overall fitness and develop upper-body strength. Students begin each day with 60 minutes of physical conditioning in a weight room filled with exercise equipment obtained through funds from the Atlanta Women's Foundation. The physiologist also provides information on nutrition and unhealthful behaviors. The students whom we interviewed agreed that the physical conditioning component was the aspect of the program that had helped them the

most. One student explained: "It's hard but it makes you feel good. It makes you go throughout the day. You don't feel tired. You feel like you want to learn. Your mind is already running." A second added that she liked the information on nutrition, and concluded: "When your body feels good, your mind feels good."

Students spend one hour and 35 minutes of each day in the trades math class and lab, "a review of basic math in the context of the trades," according to the trades math instructor. Areas of study include overcoming math anxiety; measurement and ruler reading; fractions, decimals, and percentages; basic geometry; basic algebra; and ratio and proportion. Students learn all of these concepts through "functional context," applied word problems that address the construction and building trades industry, home ownership, or day-to-day activities such as baking and telling time. Staff use a pre- and post-test to assess student achievement as well as pencil and paper quizzes on each topic.

The purpose of the women in the trades course is "to prepare students to make an informed decision about their next step." The program manager continued: "Most of the women coming in here may not have an idea of what they want to do so we really try to given them occupational skills training as well as exposure to nontraditional occupations." The course provides students with information regarding the history of construction trades as well as a broad overview of the industry and the labor market. The course also teaches students to recognize and respond to gender discrimination and sexual harassment. Role models (program graduates and other tradeswomen) serve as guest speakers, providing information on their experience in the industry and details regarding job prospects and practices at their present place of employment. Students also take field trips to area businesses. The class meets one day each week.

The job readiness class addresses job search methods, completing a job application, interviewing techniques, and dressing for the job. The class meets two days each week. In addition to discussion, guest speakers often address the class, and students work with the instructor (the program's employment specialist) to prepare a resume and research and write trade reports which they present to their peers. At the end of the class, students participate in an employee interview day which, according to the employment specialist, "enables students to get their first exposure to interviewing in a safe environment" and, for many students, results in a job.

Survival Skills for Women is a series of weekly workshops designed to facilitate life management and self-sufficiency among students by informing women of resources within the

community (including, emphasized the program's case manager, themselves and their peers at NEW Choices). The case manager (who attended training and obtained certification to present the Survival Skills series) facilitates the workshops, while students and community members (e.g., representatives from the Women's Resource Center for Domestic Violence and Legal Aid) lead the weekly discussions. The workshops address topics such as money management, self-advocacy, legal issues, and coping with crisis.

In addition to these core program components, NEW Choices offers a variety of support services. For example, through its collaborative partners, the program provides students in need with fee sponsorship and funding for child care, transportation, and meals. In addition, students reported that the case manager and their instructors provide ongoing guidance and referrals. As one student explained: "You can't say this is stopping me or that is stopping me — they [staff members] make a way." The program also provides job placement services. Throughout the 11-week training period, the employment specialist works with the students "to identify their strengths and weaknesses and determine what kind of employer might be a good match" (program staff also provide placement services to qualified nonprogram participants who contact NEW Choices for information). In addition, program staff are currently working with an organization called New Leaf to obtain cars for program graduates and "taking employers to task" on confronting barriers to employment by, for example, collaboratively offering on-the-job training opportunities.

Graduates of NEW Choices receive support through the Atlanta Tradeswomen's NETwork (described by the retention coordinator as "an offshoot of NEW Choices that is aligned with Goodwill"), which brings together program graduates and other area tradeswomen. The program manager explained that initially staff conducted follow up with NEW Choices graduates peripherally, but quickly learned their graduates' post-program support needs ("cars were breaking down, boyfriends were beating people up . . . .") required more attention. The NETwork is "dedicated to promoting, encouraging, and supporting women in the skilled trades and other nontraditional occupations and to increasing the number of tradeswomen through research, exchange of information, and mentorship." NETwork activities include a monthly potluck and production of The Hammer, a tradeswomen's newspaper, as well as leadership development, outreach, and advocacy. The organization just obtained nonprofit status and hired its first full-time, paid staff member (a NEW Choices graduate). The program manager emphasized that, in addition to the multiple benefits that the NETwork provides to program

graduates, it is able to "do things to move our cause forward that I may not be able to do because I'm aligned with the agency so we have to be a little more politically moderate." The retention coordinator also noted that while in the past NEW Choices could not always fill employers' requests for new workers, the NETwork enables them to provide more and extremely qualified referrals to inquiring employers.

In addition to services provided through the NETwork, NEW Choices program staff directly provide an ongoing source of support for program graduates through follow up activities. The job developer, for example, contacts each graduate on the evening of their first day on the job, three to four days later, and weekly thereafter (more so for those students she knows need more support) for a period of 90 days. In addition to inquiring about workplace issues, she uses the calls as an opportunity to remind graduates to notify their case workers about their current status so that they and their children do not lose benefits that continue through initial employment (e.g., child care, Medicaid). After this initial 90-day period, the retention coordinator serves as a "case manager" for program graduates, providing them with referrals as well as assistance with issues such as harassment, work ethics, and occupational advancement. Occasionally, she will bring graduates together to inquire about their current work status and wages.

Resources

In addition to three instructors (building trades, trades math, and physical conditioning), NEW Choices program staff members include a program manager, case manager, employment specialist, and retention coordinator. The program manager described herself as the "conductor,"; she oversees the daily operations of the program, secures funding, maintains relationships with collaborative partners (including the program's parent organization, Goodwill), and manages the staff. The case manager "helps to empower women by teaching them to be self-sufficient." She explained that this entails exposing them to community resources, discussing personal problems and, when appropriate, referring them to counseling and other supportive services. The case manager also runs the weekly program information sessions, handles the intake process for all students, and facilitates the Survival Skills for Women workshop series. The employment specialist teaches the job readiness and women in trades classes. She also builds and maintains relationships with employers (this includes running the

Employee Advisory Council), links graduates with job opportunities, and follows up with program graduates for the first 90 days after they obtain a job "to make sure that if any problems are occurring out there we can bring it to a resolution before they lose their job." The retention coordinator maintains contact with and provides follow-up support services to all program graduates, largely through the *Atlanta Tradeswomen NETwork*, which she was hired to help establish. Common issues she confronts include harassment, discrimination, and job loss.

The program manager described NEW Choices as "a very labor intense program because of the peripheral issues" (i.e., the barriers to successful participation that students bring into the program). She emphasized that all members of her staff bring unique personal and professional experiences into their role (the trades instructor, for example, is a program graduate) that supplement the program. As part of Goodwill, NEW Choices has performance standards for new staff (each new staff person is re-evaluated after 30, 60, and 90 days of employment) as well as an annual review process for all staff members. The program manager described the annual review as "pretty basic," noting that more informal mechanisms such as interacting with her staff on a daily basis and her open door policy are better methods of identifying staff needs and improving the program. In terms of professional development, the program manager encourages membership in relevant professional organizations (e.g., National Association of Workforce Development Professionals, Associated Builders and Contractors), as well as participation in specialized and in-house training sessions (e.g., learning new computer software).

The program manager reported that the budget for NEW Choices is approximately $350,000 per year. The Atlanta Housing Authority and Goodwill provided the seed money for the program; with each new class, funding sources vary depending upon student eligibility. The program manager explained: "We want the cities and the agencies (i.e., through programs such as JTPA and TANF) to [pay to] train them, to bring their tax dollars in to train their residents." She reported that the current class is fully funded through government agencies (the program has contracts with three separate JTPA agencies and the Federal Highway Administration), but that they have had classes in the past that were up to 50 percent funded through grants. While presently some contract funds are provided on a performance basis and others are fixed cost, the program manager noted that, given the influence of welfare reform, she expects all funds to move into the performance realm within the next year. She added that she would like to obtain more private funding for the program because of the amount of paperwork and time involved with securing and maintaining public funding sources.

> "It is unbelievable, the amount of paper and what it takes away from direct services to the clients. . . . The paperwork is just phenomenal and the correspondence and communication or lack thereof. It really takes you away from direct services for the client . . . .It's an impossible system and caught in the middle of that web is the consumer."

Program staff continually apply for grants and, in the recent past, have received monies from Home Depot and the Cousins Foundation (for tools), the Atlanta Women's Foundation (for the exercise room and equipment), Levi Strauss (for the retention coordinator), and United Way and Georgia Power (for operations).

Most recently, NEW Choices submitted a grant proposal to the Georgia Department of Transportation in which they offered to modify their program for some applicants; the retooled program would offer five weeks of in-house instruction and six weeks of on-the-job training as a paid employee. The program manager explained that they are looking for additional opportunities for this type of modification so that the program can begin to serve more women, particularly the working poor. She added that this modification would also help them to meet TANF work activity requirements more directly. Currently, the program has agreements with five other area employers to begin to offer this type of training, and the job developer is working to establish similar job training sites for each of the trades taught in the shop.

Outcomes

NEW Choices staff members conduct a monthly evaluation regarding the progress of each student and retain records on students' program completion and job placement. In addition, students evaluate the staff (once during and once upon completing the program), and employers provide feedback on program activities through an EAC survey. Goodwill requires that the program prepare periodic reports on its activities; these reports include an Annual Plan and Budget and Quarterly Q-2s (performance reports that address goals and progress), as well as miscellaneous reports upon request for monthly managers' meetings, the director of the Economic Development Group, and the Vice President of the Employment and Training Department. Program staff also report to all agencies that sponsor participants (currently JTPA and the Federal Highway Administration) and some grantors.

The project manager reported that, since its inception in 1995 (not including the present class), NEW Choices has served 248 students, of whom 211 graduated (for a completion rate of 85 percent). Of these graduates, program staff placed 187 (89 percent); employers include state and local agencies (e.g., Georgia Department of Transportation, Atlanta Housing Authority) as well as a variety of contractors in the metro Atlanta area (e.g., Thomas Concrete, John Weiland Homes, Cleveland Electrical Contractors). The average entry-level wage of program graduates is $8.15 per hour. The retention coordinator reported that she expected these program outcomes to improve during the coming year because the program has recently "focused its recruitment and intake process."

According to the program manager, students who complete NEW Choices are "outfitted from head to toe [i.e., the program provides each student with a hard hat, goggles, dust mask, ear plugs, coveralls, and steel-toed boots as well as a tool belt, tool box, and tools] with 11 weeks of experience and confidence building and a resume in their hands so they can go out there and obtain a job." She added that, in addition to hands-on experience, each student leaves the program with flagging certification, a fork lift operator's license, and, starting with the current class, a lead paint abatement certification. A former student explained that, through NEW Choices: "I got off welfare and I left with a fork lift license and [trade] skills." She added that she is now successfully participating in on-the-job training at work, noting that her employer "gave me a chance because of NEW Choices."

In addition to obtaining skills, certification, and employment, students reported that the program provides them with enhanced self-esteem and makes them aware that "there are no limitations." One student explained: "Our self-esteem is high because we know we can do the work . . . . It is an accomplishment when we complete a task." The program manager agreed: "The transformation that happens to these women is absolutely phenomenal. When they strap on that tool belt something magical happens; their back goes straight, their chest goes out . . . . And these are some women that wouldn't even look you in the eye." The building trades instructor, a NEW Choices graduate, added: "What they gain here is the fact that they make friends. They become a family."

Implications

The program manager emphasized that, in light of current welfare reform legislation, staff from vocational training programs must "get as politically involved as they possibly can and be at every table that they can be at." She emphasized: "There has to be leadership, vestment in the political process. Someone is making decisions each and every day for us and for the consumers that we serve, and we, because we're advocates for the consumers, have to be there voicing our concerns and our interests. And, by doing that, you come to mind when funding becomes available." She cited Goodwill as an example of an organization that continuously benefits from this approach, noting the fact that representatives are often the only nonprofit group invited to attend meetings of government agencies and that they are seen as "very much an equal partner if not a leading partner in many endeavors." Underlying this success, she added, is Goodwill's ongoing effort to pull other community agencies into all activities, establishing them as partners versus competitors.

To establish these collaborative relationships, the employment specialist suggested that programs inform prospective partners of how vocational training can be an asset to them and let the partners determine what collaborative role they are comfortable undertaking. The retention coordinator added that, particularly in the case of business and industry, focusing on the schedules and needs of partners facilitates their participation ("if it doesn't fit in with their life, they're not going to be in your room"). She also noted that longevity "is the essence of networking; it helps to mine deeper relationships." The program manager suggested that a leadership team (an advisory group that includes representatives from a variety of area businesses and community agencies) is a key program resource both in terms of information and buy-in. She added that ongoing mailings, follow-up calls, and forums for casual contact (hosting a breakfast or lunch for a group of partners) enable program staff to reiterate the common purpose shared by collaborative partners.

In terms of service provision, program staff members repeatedly attributed the success of NEW Choices to the fact that the program is "holistic and comprehensive." The staff explained that it is the combination of a thorough intake process, intensive case management, hands-on learning, and pre- and post-employment support services that leads to positive outcomes. The program manager added: "The entire training program is about empowerment, confidence building — sometimes we call it "construction therapy," because there's a transformation that happens . . . . We try to teach them to create communities, to look at each other as a resource, and

to really take on that persona of being a new tradeswoman and the strength that comes with that." The case manager praised "the common string of support that is given by all staff persons," noting: "Women's self-esteem improves . . . because this is the first place where they were seen, heard, and recognized not only as women but as human beings also. They have a support system . . ."

The students we interviewed cited the staff and their peers as the key to the program's effectiveness, complimenting their instructors' enthusiasm and patience and their peers' empathy and support. The program manager agreed that a good staff (which she described as "one that has the passion and dedication to do the work") is a critical resource, as is a leader who empowers that staff by providing the opportunity and autonomy for members to do their jobs. Staff members explained their success as a matter of "meeting the women where they're at" and "making [instruction] fun and making people feel comfortable." They emphasized the importance of hands on and situational [e.g., "asking the students to put themselves in the employer's shoes"] training in programs that serve welfare participants.

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ATTACHMENT 1. Georgia's Welfare-to-Work Service Delivery Model

Adapted from Georgia Department of Labor. (1998). Draft Georgia State Plan: Welfare-to-Work Formula Grants (Fiscal Year 1998). Atlanta, GA: Author.

SERVICE LEVEL 1

Client Characteristics

- No significant developmental or educational barriers to employment
- Ready for some type of employment experience
- Needs only basic interventions/supports for successful transition to employment

Potential Services

- Job Referral
- Job Readiness Workshop
- Job Search Assistance (JSA)
- Work Supplementation
- Work Experience
- Community Service
- Periodic Follow-Ups
- Child Care
- Transportation

Potential Fund Sources

- TANF
- DHR/DOL Contract
- Child Care (federal/state)
- Other available DHR, DOL, DTAE fund sources
- Other available funds as identified locally

SERVICE LEVEL 2

Client Characteristics

- Two or more significant skills/employment-related barriers
  - ~Basic Skills Deficiency
  - ~Occ. Skills Deficiency
  - ~No work history
- Needs intensive and/or extensive services and supports for successful transition to employment

Potential Services

- In-Depth Assessment
- Remediation
- Occ. Skills Training
- OJT
- Work Experience
- Community Service
- Job Clubs
- Intensive JSA
- Child Care
- Transportation
- Mentoring
- Case Management

Potential Fund Sources

- JTPA
- New Connections to Work
- HOPE
- Welfare-to-Work
- TANF
- Child Care (federal/state)
- Other available DHR, DOL, DTAE fund sources
- Other available funds as identified locally

SERVICE LEVEL 3

Client Characteristics

- Significant physical, mental or medical barrier which must be addressed before or with employment-related (level 2) barriers

Potential Services

- In-Depth Assessment
- Testing
- Counseling
- Rehabilitation
- Job Coaching
- Supported Employment
- Child Care
- Transportation
- Case Management
- Other level 2 services as needed

Potential Fund Sources

- Public Health
- Mental Health/Mental Retardation/Substance Abuse
- Welfare-to-Work
- TANF
- Child Care (federal/state)
- Other available funds as identified locall

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Parents as Scholars
Department of Human Services
Augusta, Maine

Overview

Maine, which has a long history of allowing some welfare clients to participate in postsecondary education, created its Parents as Scholars (PaS) program after PRWORA was enacted in 1996. Through state maintenance of effort funds, PaS currently provides about 1,000 individuals who are eligible for TANF with comparable benefits, including Medicaid and support services. Participants enroll in two- and four-year programs offered by universities and technical colleges throughout the state.[1] PaS provides tuition assistance only in rare cases; most students obtain scholarships, loans, or grants. In 1999, the program was a semifinalist for an Innovation in American Government award from Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

Due to fiscal constraints, and in light of the federal emphasis on "work first," the program's enabling legislation specifies that not more than 2,000 individuals may participate in PaS. Individuals who enroll in the program agree to the following conditions:

- They must participate in a combination of education, training, study, or work-site experience for an average of 20 hours per week for the first 24 months;[2]
- An individual who remains in the program for more than 24 months must perform a minimum of 20 hours per week of work-site experience related, as much as possible, to the educational program in which she is enrolled, in addition to time spent in education, training, or study;
- Students must be enrolled full-time, with the expectation that they will obtain their degrees (either two- or four-year) within the normal time frame, and making satisfactory progress as defined in the State TANF Program Policy Manual;
- In a two-parent household where one of the parents is in PaS and the other parent is participating in TANF, the second parent must participate in countable activities for a minimum of 25 hours per week.

[1] To our knowledge, the only other state that allows TANF clients to pursue two- and four-year degrees is Wyoming. In January 1999, officials in that state indicated that approximately 20 TANF clients were participating in their program.

[2] PaS' enabling legislation sets the work requirement for program participants at 20 hours per week, rather than the 25 hours per week required of TANF clients as of July 1999. State guidelines allow PaS students to count both class and study time (based on one and one-half hours of study for each hour of class) toward the work requirement.

Context

Maine has allowed welfare recipients to pursue postsecondary education since 1981, when the Reagan administration established the Work Incentive (WIN) demonstration program to encourage states to develop innovative ways to prepare clients for employment. In that year, the state adopted legislation to create the Welfare Employment Education and Training (WEET) program, which provided benefits and services to individuals enrolled in postsecondary education. Officials changed the name of WEET to Additional Support for People in Retraining and Employment (ASPIRE) in 1994.

At about that time, in anticipation of new federal legislation, Maine began moving toward a "work first" model. When PRWORA was enacted in 1996, officials changed the name of the state's TANF program to ASPIRE; in accordance with federal requirements, ASPIRE participants may receive vocational education and training services for no more than 12 months. The following year, university officials and staff from the Maine Equal Justice Partnership (MEJP), an advocacy group and legal services provider, developed the idea for PaS. With the support of the state's Department of Human Services (DHS) and backing from a variety of grassroots organizations, a bill drafted by MEJP became law in that year. Since PaS was funded entirely by state general funds,[3] participants were not subject to the 12-month limitation on vocational education and training.

State legislation requires clients in both ASPIRE and PaS to sign a "Family Contract," which outlines what they must do in return for the benefits and services that they receive. Although Maine requires almost all TANF clients to participate in work activities, the state defines "work" broadly, to include work study, training-related practicums, internships, volunteer time, and other activities. Under ASPIRE, some clients enroll in short-term vocational training programs offered by technical colleges and local adult education programs. The state counts these individuals - many of whom become Certified Nursing Assistants, earn certificates in clerical programs, or train for customer service jobs - toward its work participation rate.

For families that exceed the 60-month limit for benefits from federal funds, Maine plans to provide assistance from its own funds for an unspecified length of time.[4] Although the state's TANF benefit level is relatively low (a maximum of $439 a month for a family of three), it does

[3] The program's budget for FY 1999 was $2.25 million.

[4] The time that an individual spends in PaS does not count toward the TANF lifetime limit.

provide a "special housing allowance" of $50 a month for families whose housing costs equal 75 percent or more of their monthly income. Individuals with a child under the age of two are exempt from work requirements. Under these policies, Maine's caseload dropped by 32 percent during the first two years after passage of PRWORA (Administration for Children and Families, 1999). Administrators indicated, however, that caseload numbers are now leveling off: at the time of our visit, about 14,000 remained on the rolls. Unfortunately, officials noted, although many of these individuals have multiple barriers to employment, most do not qualify as "hard to serve" under U.S. Department of Labor funding criteria.

Caseworkers try to accommodate clients' individual interests in both ASPIRE and PaS; as one official noted, "Our rules state that, insofar as possible, the clients we work with have a say." They expect, however, that participants will earn certificates or degrees for which there is a strong market. According to one administrator, most new job openings in the state are in the service industry; telemarketing companies also hire many former welfare recipients. The state's overall unemployment rate is low: around four percent, although some counties have higher rates.

Organizational Structure

DHS' Bureau of Family Independence administers PaS. Staff in 15 regional offices are responsible for determining eligibility, processing applications, and conducting orientation sessions, as well as for payment of benefits for both ASPIRE and PaS. Although some of the case managers who work in these offices hold four-year degrees, it is also possible for DHS employees to qualify for the position through on-the-job experience.

Maine's two- and four-year postsecondary institutions provide input into program operations through their representatives on the state's TANF advisory committee and its PaS subcommittee. Central Maine Technical College's Dean of Students represents the state's technical colleges, while The University of Southern Maine's (USM's) Vice President for Student Affairs represents four-year institutions; both of these individuals are actively involved in program implementation. USM's Director of Women's Studies has also devoted time to developing a follow-up survey of PaS participants and will be responsible for analysis of its results.

Attorneys from MEJP contributed to program development and implementation by drafting and lobbying for passage of the enabling legislation. The advocacy group also disseminates information about the program: in addition to responding to requests from individuals, it posts information about PaS on its Web site, distributes a printed brochure about the program that both MEJP and DHS use, and conducts client information sessions at agencies that serve low-income individuals.

According to the individuals we interviewed, the fact that Maine is a small state makes it easier for DHS, the postsecondary institutions, and MEJP to work closely together. "Everybody knows you and you know them," one university representative explained, "so it's a simple state to work in." Another observed that legislators, the governor, the chancellor of the university system, the presidents of technical colleges, and the commissioner of DHS are all ". . .accessible and willing to work with each other."

Services

In order to participate in PaS, individuals must:

- ***Be eligible for TANF;***
- ***Have a high school diploma or equivalent*** if required by the institution they attend;[5]
- ***Lack the skills*** to earn at least 85 percent of the state's median wage ($34,723 for a family of three);
- ***Lack a marketable bachelor's degree;***
- ***Pursue a degree*** that will improve their ability to support their family;
- ***Have the ability to succeed*** in the program that they choose; and
- ***Have matriculated*** into a two- or four-year postsecondary program (as defined by the institution, usually meaning having been accepted and enrolled or registered).

Once admitted, students must meet work requirements and make "satisfactory progress," maintaining a Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.0. For an individual whose GPA falls below 2.0, DHS will allow one probationary semester before they are dropped from the program. Department policy calls for participants to complete their educational programs in the usual time

[5]Some institutions have "open admissions" policies that do not require high school diplomas or the equivalent. PaS participants may also matriculate on a "conditional" basis, gaining admission subject to their remedying academic deficiencies.

period, although case mangers will allow up to three years for a two-year program, and up to six years for a four-year program, for "good cause," as defined in the state's TANF policy manual. Case managers have some flexibility in deciding what counts as good cause: "We don't want to drive someone over the edge," one administrator explained. "Sometimes it's better to back off and slow down a bit." PaS students must also attend classes as required by their schools, report to their case managers anything that might affect their ability to participate in the program; and give their case managers copies of financial aid award letters and grades. Anyone who does not comply with these rules may be required to return to the ASPIRE program.

When the legislature created PaS in 1997, DHS transferred 600 welfare recipients who were already participating in postsecondary education into the program. A total of 1,046 individuals were enrolled in PaS at the time of our visit in June 1999. Although state law permits the program to serve up to 2,000 TANF-eligible clients, officials indicated that it is ". . . not for everybody." One-third of the individuals who make up Maine's current caseload do not have high school diplomas; others may be prevented from participating by health problems, domestic violence, or substance abuse. "(PaS) is an option," one official suggested, "for some people who can handle this, that have the wherewithall to study, to do the schooling, take care of the kids, to do everything else." Another agreed, noting that individuals who enroll in PaS ". . . are the part of the welfare population that (is) going to be successful," because they have the motivation, life skills, and coping abilities necessary to manage the demands of both family and school.

As Exhibit 1 indicates, PaS students are very similar to the general TANF population in terms of age, family size, and educational level. The typical PaS student is a single 30-year-old mother with one or two children; the average age of participants' children is seven. In March 1999, 389 of 1,046 PaS students were enrolled in four-year programs; the remainder were in two-year programs (including 588 in associate degree programs, and 69 in two-year vocational-technical programs). Administrators noted, however, that individuals sometimes progress from two-year to four-year programs if they are in fields (e.g., accounting) where it is difficult to find employment without a four-year degree.

Because it is easier and quicker to receive TANF benefits than it is to qualify for PaS, most of the individuals that DHS serves initially apply for TANF assistance. Within a week or two after they apply, all clients attend an orientation session where they learn about the benefits

Exhibit 1. Comparison of TANF and PaS Recipients: April, 1999

	TANF	PaS	Total
# of Families	12,846	1,009	13,855
• # of children served	22,002	1,625	23,627
• avg. # children per family	1.7	1.6	1.7
• child only families	2,343	9	2,352
• 1 - parent families	9,676	949	10,625
• 2 - parent families (incapacity)	201	11	212
• 2 - parent families (PWE underemployed)	626	401	666
Average age of parents	32	30	32
Average age of children	8	7	7
Average school age completed	9	10	9
# of families who are non-citizens	257	11	268
# of working families	2,814	174	2,988
# of families with unearned income	1,284	51	1,335
# of families receiving SN* payments	3,468	225	3,693
# of families receiving Pass Thru + /or Gap payments			4,809
# Minor Parent Head of Household	59	0	59
• average age of minor parent	16	0	16
# of families with married adults	2,325	123	2,448
# of active sanctions on open families	580	16	596
Avg. Monthly Grant Amount	$358	$402	$362
Avg. Monthly Food Stamps	$223	$232	$224
Avg. Pass Thru and Gap Payment	$119	$140	$121
Avg. Monthly Transitional Child Care	$317	$247	$316
Avg. Transitional Trans. Reimb., 3 months	$334	$337	$334
# of Alternative Aid (AA) families			262
• # AA families who remain off TANF/PaS			207

* Special Needs Housing Allowance of up to $50 per month.
SOURCE: Bureau of Family Independence.

and services available to them (including PaS), and complete the state's Family Contract. Those who are interested in postsecondary education may apply for PaS at orientation or at any later time. PaS' enabling legislation requires DHS to respond to the application within 30 days. It also requires the Department to approve an application if the individual meets program requirements, and very few applicants have been denied admission. TANF recipients, however, cannot officially transfer to the state-supported program until they have matriculated (although

case workers may assist them in preparing for the transition). Once the individual's application has been approved, her case manager prepares an appropriate amendment for the Family Contract.

PaS students are responsible for selecting their own courses of study and schools; participants enroll in a wide variety of programs at both state-supported and other institutions. Administrators noted that students have a great deal of flexibility, and that case managers work closely with them. However, DHS will only support a program that leads to employability. One university administrator suggested that she would like to see a greater emphasis on career tracks, rather than just employment, in the approval process.

PaS students are entitled to the same benefits and services as TANF clients, including:

- ***Monthly cash assistance;***
- ***Child care*** for children under 13 years old;
- ***Transportation*** allowance of 24 cents a mile for up to 400 miles a week, or reimbursement for public transportation or car pooling;
- ***Car repairs*** up to $500 per year;
- ***Auto liability insurance*** up to a maximum of $300 a year;
- ***Eye care*** not covered by Medicaid, including up to $150 for glasses;
- ***Books and supplies*** up to $600 a year;
- ***Clothing and uniform costs*** up to $300 a year;
- ***Occupational expenses*** up to $500 a year, including tools, equipment, examination fees, or license fees; and
- ***Other expenses*** necessary for the individual to participate in PaS, up to $200 per year (MEJP, 1999).

As students at the universities and technical schools, PaS participants are entitled to the same services that others receive, including counseling and assistance with the financial aid application process. Central Maine Technical College's Dean of Students noted that he was encouraging all of the state's technical colleges to designate their Gender Equity Coordinators as the principal contact with PaS students in order to improve their access to specialized services. At his institution, welfare recipients will also be able to utilize the services of a new "Transfer Counselor" whose position is supported by a federal Trio grant. This counselor will work with entering students to help them remedy academic deficiencies, and with graduates who want to enter four-year programs.

The institutions represented by the individuals we interviewed also offered a variety of support services, including personal counseling sessions, job opportunities on and off campus, job search assistance, parenting support groups, cooperative education, wellness programs; on-campus housing, and child care. Administrators noted, however, that welfare recipients often came from "an environment of silence," in which people "disappear" instead of coming forward to ask for help when they encounter problems.

Resources

PaS is supported entirely with state maintenance of effort funds. Annual per-student costs for support services are about $1,200, versus $1,000 for ASPIRE participants. Expenditures for individual cases vary widely, however, ranging from $200 to many times the average amount.

At the local level, no DHS staff members are assigned specifically to PaS. ASPIRE case managers serve program participants as part of their usual caseloads, which average about 165 clients. Since PaS students are located throughout the state, the number of participants that each caseworker handles is low, ranging from 10 to 30. Both TANF and PaS cases are transferred to an "eligibility specialist" when the client goes to work; the specialist is responsible for providing the transitional services to which participants in both programs are entitled.

To inform DHS and university staff about the PaS program, administrators from the Department, the University of Southern Maine System, and the state's technical college system held a joint training program in May 1999. DHS regional supervisors and university and technical college personnel from throughout the state attended the session, which included an overview of the program, as well as information on: (1) postsecondary admission and financial aid; (2) services and resources for university and technical college students; and (3) the national context for the program. During the conference, DHS' regional supervisors met with representatives of the universities and colleges in their areas, and discussed plans for further training of state and regional staff. One technical college was planning to hold a half-day orientation session for local case managers.

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Outcomes

At the time of our visit, DHS and university administrators were making plans for a follow-up survey of PaS students. Department officials were also working with their computer programming staff to obtain information about participants from DHS' database. An outdated computer system, however, makes it necessary for programmers to submit special runs in order to obtain the information that administrators need, and there are many competing demands (e.g., Y2K issues) on their time. Consequently, state officials were able to provide only limited data about the persistence and progress of participants in this relatively new program.

Administrators do have evidence to support the argument that TANF clients should have access to postsecondary education, and how it benefits them. A 1994 survey of Maine welfare recipients who had worked within the previous 12 months showed that they earned an average wage of $5.37 an hour: only about half of the amount needed to support a mother and two children (Seguino, 1995). DHS data for state fiscal years 1993 through 1997 show that individuals who completed two-year postsecondary programs earned higher average wages, and were more likely to find jobs that included health benefits, than the general welfare population. Completion of a four-year program produced even greater benefits (see Exhibit 2). A 1996 study of welfare recipients in Maine also demonstrated that individuals who had a high school diploma

Exhibit 2. Average Wage on Entering Employment and Percent with Health Benefits for Families Leaving AFDC

State Fiscal Year	Average wage — all AFDC cases*	Average wage — 2 year post-secondary	Average wage — 4 year post-secondary	Percent with benefits — all AFDC cases	Percent with benefits — 2 year post-secondary	Percent with benefits — 4 year post-secondary
SFY 93	$6.05	$7.71	$8.15	29.08	46.67	61.11
SFY 94	$5.72	$7.11	$7.72	21.00	31.43	58.14
SFY 95	$5.74	$7.00	$7.18	25.75	43.06	33.96
SFY 96	$6.53	$6.24	$8.24	11.35	27.03	52.63
SFY 97	$5.95	$6.90	$8.64	10.15	28.04	34.00

*These data pertains to all AFDC recipients, including those enrolled in two- and four-year postsecondary education. Since it includes those in postsecondary education who tend to have higher wages and greater incidence of health coverage, it will slightly overstate the average wage and percent of coverage for those who did not enter employment after completing a postsecondary education program.

SOURCE: Deprez, Hastedt, and Henderson, undated

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or some postsecondary education were considerably less likely to return to welfare than those who did not have high school diplomas (Lazere, 1996, cited in Deprez, Hastedt, and Henderson, undated).

Based on anecdotal evidence, administrators believe that most individuals who enroll in PaS remain in the program, rather than transferring back to TANF. They reported that, while the average starting wage for TANF clients in 1998 was between $6 and $7 an hour, some PaS participants have started work at $11 to $14 an hour. Graduates enter a wide variety of fields, including careers in the medical, human services, and computer fields; one regional supervisor whom we interviewed noted that social services and nursing were especially popular fields for clients in his region.

In its 1999 Innovations in American Government award application, DHS described a number of benefits resulting from the program:

> . . . PaS participants and their families demonstrate increased self-esteem and confidence, fewer family crises, and strengthened family interactions particularly around issues related to education; DHS staff find that participants require fewer support services and less employee time and energy; employers now have access to a more well-rounded and educated work force; the campus communities experience greater diversity among their student population and hence increased acceptance of difference; and the state of Maine sees genuine prospects of higher earning power and a stronger tax base as well as a more educated and viable citizenry (Bureau of Family Independence, 1999, p. 2).

Administrators hope that the planned survey of PaS participants will provide them with detailed data about students in the program. According to USM's Director of Women's Studies, who developed the survey questionnaire, the 20-page document will collect information about participants' arrangements for child care and transportation, their finances, what a typical day or week is like for them, whether their self-esteem has improved, how they interact with their children, and what they plan to do when they finish school. Representatives of DHS and MEJP, the TANF advisory committee members representing postsecondary institutions, and PaS students provided input in development of the questionnaire. USM will pay a graduate student to assist with the survey, which was distributed in June 1999. To preserve confidentiality, DHS will be responsible for the mailout.

Implications

The experience of Maine's PaS program offers a number of lessons concerning the context in which welfare-to-work programs operate, their organizational structures, the services they provide, the resources they require, and the outcomes they produce, including the following:

- ***To convince legislators in other states to create programs similar to PaS, program developers may need a broad base of support.*** University and technical college representatives and advocacy groups worked together to develop the program's enabling legislation, and to counter public opposition to the idea of postsecondary education for welfare recipients. DHS' *Innovations in American Government* application attributes successful passage of the statute to ". . .a ground swell of support from myriad organizations and individuals," ". . .a considerable amount of political groundwork," and extensive lobbying by the Senate's majority leader.
- ***Postsecondary institutions and welfare agencies involved in similar programs may need to develop procedures to ensure that clients are aware of all available support services.*** PaS participants may have access to more resources than most TANF clients do, since they can take advantage of support services offered by the institutions they attend. Due to confidentiality concerns, however, there is no procedure for DHS to notify the educational institution about the individual's welfare status. University and technical school administrators were interested in finding ways to identify the students; e.g., one local DHS office had developed a release form that would allow the school to contact the student. This will enable them to ensure that PaS participants are aware of available support services, and to track their progress through the institution.
- ***Collaborating postsecondary institutions and welfare agencies may also need to find ways to share information about their programs and services with each other.*** Welfare agency workers do not necessarily know about admission and financial aid requirements, or about the variety of instructional and support services that universities and technical schools offer. By the same token, staff at postsecondary institutions may not be familiar with the concerns and needs of TANF clients, or with PaS policies and procedures. PaS' Joint Training Program—which involved state, regional, and local DHS personnel, as well as admissions and financial aid staff from a variety of postsecondary institutions—provided an opportunity for individuals from both agencies to share information, and to begin developing working relationships among themselves. As DHS personnel develop closer relationships with postsecondary staff, one administrator observed, a case manager who "sees a client struggling" will know who on campus to contact for help.
- ***Programs that allow TANF clients to pursue postsecondary degrees may be easier to implement in small states.*** Maine's state bureaucracy was small enough for DHS administrators to develop close working relationships with individuals in the university and technical college system. As a result, DHS readily included those staff members on the TANF advisory committee.

- ***Defining education as work does not necessarily mean that large numbers of TANF clients will choose to participate in postsecondary programs.*** Attending classes and studying for 20 hours a week fulfills the work requirement for the first two years of PaS. Nevertheless, only about 1,000 individuals (out of a total caseload of 14,000) have elected to participate in the program. Those who do must support themselves and their families with their PaS benefit (a maximum of $439 a month for a family of three) and earnings from part-time jobs, while finding ways to finance their own schooling and keeping up with their studies.
- ***Programs similar to PaS are not likely to overburden caseworkers.*** State officials whom we interviewed indicated that individuals who meet PaS requirements are likely to have the life skills and motivation necessary to handle any problems that they encounter without extensive assistance from caseworkers.

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Regional Employment Network – Erie County

Buffalo ACCESS Center
Buffalo, New York

Overview

The Regional Employment Network (REN), a network of 12 employment and training agencies in Erie County, New York, grew out of two state initiatives:

- ***The Education for Gainful Employment (EDGE) program,*** which since 1990 has provided formula grants to local Departments of Social Services (DSSs) to offer educational services to welfare recipients; and
- ***The state's Adult Centers for Comprehensive Support Services (ACCESS) Centers,*** created in 1989 by New York's Departments of Education, Labor, and Social Services to provide comprehensive services to adults.

The ACCESS Center in Buffalo (the county seat) coordinates the activities of member agencies, which are organized into four "hubs." The hubs are located in various parts of the county and linked by a shared information system that allows clients who enter the system at any point to be referred to the most appropriate services, regardless of where those services are offered.

Most REN members receive EDGE funds from the local DSS. Until several years ago, the EDGE agencies provided pre-employment services (e.g., GED instruction, resume writing, and some skill training) to welfare recipients. With the passage of PRWORA and its emphasis on "work first," however, they have shifted their focus to post-employment and job retention services.

The state of New York, and Erie County, are in the early stages of establishing their one-stop centers. Erie County's County Executive has appointed a steering committee for the county's Workforce Investment Board. Many County Executives are designating their Private Industry Councils (PICs) or community colleges as one-stops, and Erie County's PIC is still in existence. REN administrators hope, however, that their network will become the county's one-stop. They note that it provides both the "core" and "intensive" services that the Workforce Investment Act calls for, and is designed to be flexible.

Context

State

New York's policies on public assistance have historically been liberal. According to the Urban Institute, the state has one of the highest benefit levels in the nation (Riedinger, Aron, Loprest, and O'Brien, undated). In addition to the federally funded TANF program (which it calls "Family Assistance"), New York has a state-funded "Safety Net" program that provides benefits to single individuals and childless couples, as well as to families who exceed the five-year TANF limit. Safety Net offers cash benefits for a maximum of two years, but gives participants vouchers for housing and utilities after that time.

Although the state's Welfare Reform Act of 1997 requires most welfare recipients to work, the state defines "work" broadly. Local DSSs assign many participants to "workfare," or work experience, programs in the public sector. (Work experience in the private sector does not meet work requirements.) Single parents of children under the age of three months are exempt from work requirements. Families are allowed to have up to $2,000 worth of assets, and may own a car valued at up to $4,650. The state's earned income disregard includes the first $90 per month and 45 percent of subsequent earnings up to the poverty level.

Throughout the state, welfare-to-work programs have moved many TANF clients into the workforce: while about 1.1 million individuals were receiving welfare benefits in August 1996, the number fell by 27 percent (to less than one million) by the end of 1998 (Administration for Children and Families, 1999). Each county, however, is responsible for 25 percent of the cost of operating its TANF and Medicaid programs. (New York is one of 11 states with such a cost-sharing requirement, and has the highest local share among the group.) As a result, the counties have considerable flexibility in designing their programs and services. Thus, New York's welfare-to-work programs are best characterized as "state directed and locally administered" (Liebschutz, 1999).

Erie County's DSS has adopted a "work first" philosophy and, in most cases, clients are referred to a county-run job club at their earliest convenience. If clients are unsuccessful in obtaining a job and it is deemed appropriate, clients then can be approved for, and referred to, education and training. Respondents indicated, however, that local caseworkers are generally supportive of individuals who indicate an interest in education and training programs that they learn about on their own.

Local

REN serves Erie County, which includes more than 1,000 square miles. The majority of the county's population of about one million lives in Buffalo, the county seat, although the service area also includes suburban and rural areas. In the past, the area produced steel, grain, lumber, and coal, and most jobs were in urban areas. Now, however, job growth is predominantly in the service sector. In the last year, growth has been relatively flat in general, with most new job openings occurring in manufacturing, banking, telecommunications, and "call centers." The area is a particularly attractive one for call centers, which may perform a variety of functions, including serving as customer service centers, processing catalog orders, and conducting surveys. Its time zone allows two shifts of workers to place calls anywhere in the world during business hours. Erie County also offers readily available fiber optic services, and a good supply of workers who do not have strong regional accents.

REN grew out of New York's EDGE Program and its ACCESS Centers. The state Departments of Education and Labor jointly administer EDGE, which combines federal TANF dollars with funds from the state's Welfare Education Program (WEP). Local DSSs, in turn, redistribute these funds to a variety of providers, including local education agencies (LEAs), Boards of Cooperative Education (BOCES, or intermediate units), community-based organizations (CBOs), colleges, and employment and training agencies. When EDGE clients are served by LEAs or BOCES, they also generate state Employment Preparation Education (EPE) funds, which provide matching funds to help the county draw down its full share of the federal TANF allocation. Erie County DSS received a total of approximately $1 million in EDGE funds (primarily from federal sources) in Fiscal Year '98, and distributed those funds to a dozen employment and training agencies.

EDGE programs must offer activities that count for federal work participation purposes; stand-alone classroom programs are not permitted. Allowable work activities include job readiness, work experience, community service, vocational education, job placement, and post-employment services. The program can also provide basic skills and job skills training in conjunction with work components or internships.

Among the EDGE providers in Erie County are four of the state's ACCESS Centers (Ken-Ton ACCESS, Erie 1 BOCES, Erie 2 BOCES, Erie Community College, and Buffalo ACCESS). Created by the state's Departments of Education, Labor, and Social Services, New York's 57 ACCESS Centers (which one respondent described as "Education's 'one-stop'

ahead of its time") provide comprehensive services for dislocated workers, displaced homemakers, economically disadvantaged individuals, unemployed adults, and other individuals. ACCESS services include job search counseling, skills upgrading, prevocational skills training, literacy and ESL instruction, employment skills instruction, and assessment. A study by the Westchester Institute for Human Service Research found that implementation of the ACCESS model "results in important advantages in delivering multi-disciplinary programs and services, including improved use of resources, less duplication of activities, and improved strategies for addressing unique community-based problems" (Westchester Institute for Human Service Research, cited in Regional Employment Network, 1999b, p. 8).

From 1990 to 1996, the Erie County EDGE grantees operated as a consortium, with each agency providing a full range of services (e.g., programming, job development, placement, and retention). Agency administrators soon realized, however, that they were competing with each other in a performance-based program, while serving a shrinking TANF population. "We were competing for the same clients," one respondent explained, "and fighting over credit, especially if clients received services from more than one (agency)."

Both state and local administrators wanted to create a system that would utilize common assessment and intake procedures to serve a larger area, incorporate a shared information system, and employ a "no wrong door" design so that clients entering the system at any location could be referred to appropriate services regardless of where they were offered. Administrators believed that such a system would provide better services to the public, businesses, funders, and taxpayers, and that it could be expanded to serve a broader client base (i.e., both TANF recipients and others) in the future.

State administrators have encouraged all of the ACCESS Centers to adopt such a systems approach. As part of this effort, they have:

- ***Worked with staff from the centers to identify the "Essential Features"*** of ACCESS Centers (shown in Exhibit 1).
- ***Supported the development of performance indicators*** based on those features (Capital Assessments, 1999). The indicators, which the state is currently field testing, will help the centers identify continuous improvement methodologies.
- ***Set aside EDGE funds for competitive "Partnership" and "Technology" Grants***, which local programs can use to help create provider networks.

Exhibit 1. Essential Features of ACCESS

- Comprehensive educational programs for adults — including basic education, family literacy, occupational education, life skills, and expanding workplace skills — related to family, personal, employment, and community goals;
- Integrated programs and services based on the needs of individuals regardless of demographics or funding sources;
- Workforce and training programs which meet the needs of business and industry, as well as facilitating the transition from school to the workplace;
- Core support services which include, but are not limited to, job placement and employment-related services, comprehensive assessment, adult career counseling, case management, and access to child care;
- Contextualized instruction strategies organized around the attainment of life goals;
- Demonstrated public and private connections which ensure that services are coordinated, efficient, and cost effective;
- Programs and services from a variety of funding sources and using a variety of funding methods;
- Continuous improvement process to ensure that all services are of the highest quality, effectiveness, and meet standards of accountability; and
- Strategies which aggressively market programs and services.

SOURCE: Regional Employment Network. (1999). *Success through networking and partnering*. Buffalo, NY: Author.

However, only one or two counties (including neighboring Chautauqua and Niagara Counties) have so far adopted an approach similar to REN's.

Organizational Structure

Participating agencies and organizations

REN originally included only EDGE providers, but is in the process of expanding to incorporate additional agencies. As Exhibit 2 shows, a total of 12 organizations currently participate in the network. Four of the member agencies act as "hubs," assuming responsibility for collecting performance data required by DSS and the state Departments of Education and Labor, seeing that services are provided as assigned, and interfacing with the business community and other partners. They are:

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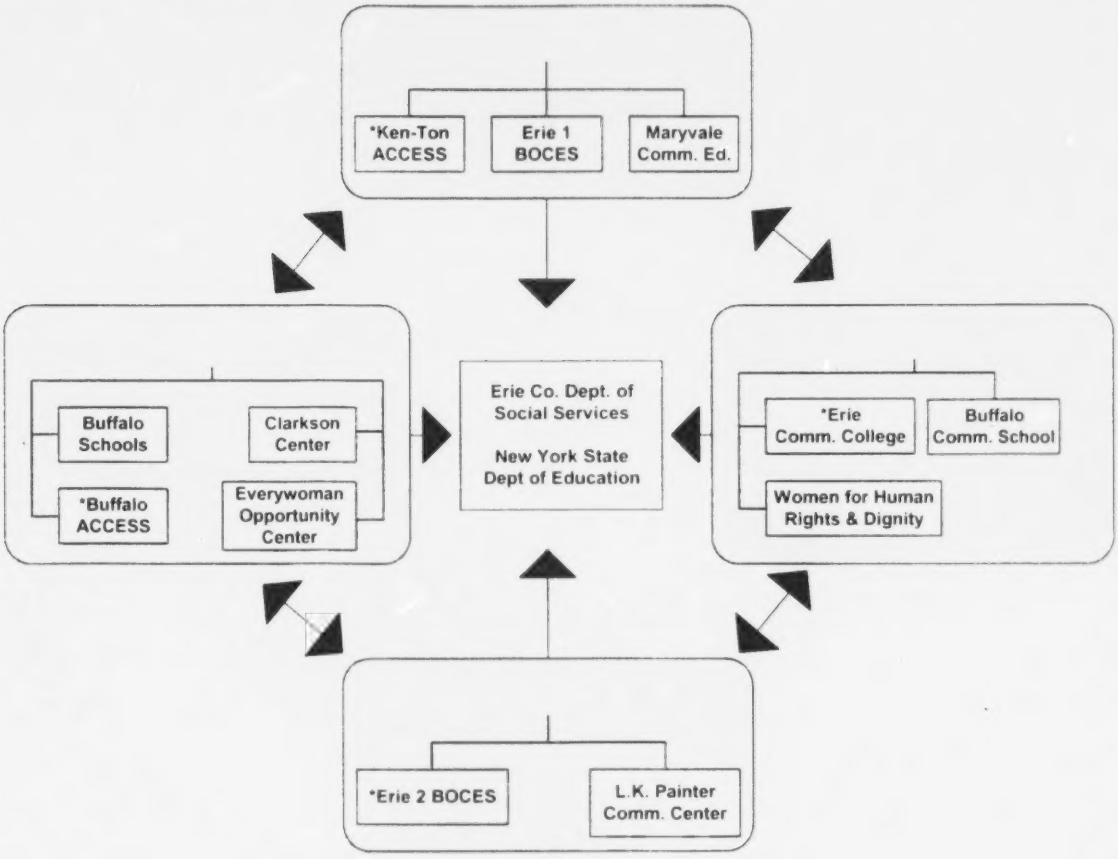
Exhibit 2. Regional Employment Network Organizational Structure.



All agencies communicate with New York State Dept. of Labor, the Private Industry Council, and the Educational Opportunity Center's Bridge program.

* Hub agency.

Source: Regional Employment Network. (1999). *Success through networking and partnering.* Buffalo, NY: Author.

- ***The Buffalo ACCESS Center,*** which serves as the "City" Hub;
- ***Erie Community College,*** which has three locations, and is the "East Central" Hub;
- ***Erie 2 BOCES,*** with two locations, designated as the "South" Hub; and
- ***Kenmore-Tonawanda (Ken-Ton) ACCESS Center***, the "North" Hub.

The Buffalo ACCESS Center has primary responsibility for coordinating REN activities. To facilitate communication, representatives of member organizations meet once a month. They rotate responsibility for hosting the meeting, as well as for chairing and recording the

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proceedings. This informal structure, one respondent explained, works because of trust that network members have in each other.

One of the most important ways that REN facilitates collaboration among its member agencies is through a new information system that it developed with support from one of the state's "Partnership" grants. All agencies can access the recently implemented system, which permits a client to enter the network at one location and, if necessary, attend training at another and receive post-employment services at a third. The system not only offers clients a wider array of training choices, but also allows network agencies to offer employers a broader group of potential applicants. Based on Microsoft Access, it was designed by PCI of Buffalo.

The information system facilitates case management in several ways, and staff members currently use it primarily for that purpose. Because DSS also has access to the system, counselors can use it to obtain immediate approval for training activities. (In the past, respondents noted, many prospective participants lost interest during the lengthy approval process, and DSS staff had no way of knowing whether clients actually enrolled in training programs.) The information system allows any user to review the daily notes that caseworkers enter, and to see which agency is serving a particular client at any given time. It also maintains data on hours worked and wages, and helps network agencies collect the retention data that DSS requires by generating letters to employers on a flow basis, with follow-up letters if there is no response to the first mailing. Finally, the system facilitates management of post-employment services: when a client takes a job, the hub serving the geographic area where he is working assumes responsibility for his case.

Network administrators believe that their information system will become even more useful in the future. Because they designed it in consultation with experts responsible for other state and local data networks (e.g., those that will be operated by the one-stops), they expect that REN will be able to interact with those systems. They also hope to shift to a web-based environment in the future. Finally, they would like to make the system interactive, so that job seekers and employers can more easily communicate their needs to member agencies.

Services

Participant characteristics

Because Erie County's DSS does not immediately refer clients directly to training programs, the TANF clients who enroll in REN programs are those: (1) who have failed to find

employment through job clubs; or (2) who have, on their own initiative, approached their counselors about training activities. Member agencies indicated that they spend a significant amount of money and time recruiting clients through a variety of methods.

REN agencies are particularly interested in targeting welfare recipients who are working but for less than the required 20 hours per week. The county's caseload currently includes 3,000 to 4,000 individuals (out of a total of 11,000) who fall into this category. By providing these individuals with training that will help them obtain full-time work, administrators anticipate that REN can help DSS improve its work participation rates.

Administrators believe that, by linking with DSS's database, REN's new information system will help network agencies identify and serve individuals who are working less than full-time. At present, respondents noted, DSS has difficulty in tracking clients after they go to work, especially since New York is one of a few states that do not have an Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage reporting system (perhaps the only one).

Description of services

As Exhibit 3 illustrates, REN's member agencies provide a wide array of services. The Buffalo ACCESS Center also offers clients access to a number of programs that are co-located at the City Hub, including:

- ***The Department of Labor's Division of Employment Services***, which provides information on available jobs, job counseling, and unemployment claims processing.
- ***A program called "New Ventures,"*** supported by Perkins gender equity funds, which provides women with GED and job-specific training, along with intensive case management and support services.
- ***A licensed day care center,*** open from 6:30 a.m. to midnight, which can serve about 70 children ranging in age from six weeks to 12 years. The center receives about 70 percent of its funding through DSS, with additional support from United Way, family literacy funding, and the state's universal pre-K program, as well as private-pay clients
- ***Job Club classes.*** The Center conducts about 10 job club classes, each with 15-20 participants, a month.
- ***A Young Parent Program (YPP),*** staffed by six social welfare examiners, three employment counselors, and two caseworkers. The YPP provides its clients with help in obtaining public assistance, food stamps and Medicaid; enrolling in basic skills or
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Exhibit 3. Member Agencies and Services

Agency	Services	
Buffalo Access Center (City Hub)*	• Coordination of Regional Employment Network • Maintenance and coordination of data network • Remedial literacy and math at workplace or ACCESS Center	• On-site child care from 6:30 a.m. to midnight • Computer skills and upgrading • Post-employment case management
Buffalo Schools Adult Learning Center*	• English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction • English usage and diction for native speakers • Academic subjects	• Case management for problems diverting workers' attention from job • Job coaching, career counseling, and other programs to improve retention and increase earnings
Clarkson Center*	• Basic skills training • GED services	• Career development • Job coaching
Everywoman Opportunity Center*	• Intensive case management • Career counseling • Professional clothing	
Other community partners	• Child care • Transportation • Clothing and equipment assistance	• Support groups • Mental health services
Erie 2 BOCES (South Hub)*	• Action for Personal Choice • Case management • Contextualized learning • GED, ABE, ESL • Job coaching • Job readiness training	• Liaison between client and employer • Life skills • Upgrade skills • Vocational training as approved by DSS • Work-based education • Workplace literacy
L. K. Painter Community Center*	• Action for Personal Choice • Case management • Crisis management • Direct employer contact	• GED • Parenting follow-up • Vocational education training

Exhibit 3 (continued)

Agency	Services	
Erie Community College (East Central Hub)*	• Basic skills instruction • Job retention services • Soft skills training • Career counseling • Evening classes and night workshops • Skill enhancement at employer sites	• Contextualized lessons plans • Intensive case management for 90 days or more • Calls-ins welcomed on Tuesdays • Monthly mailings on evening offerings • Family night once a quarter
Buffalo Community School*	• Case management • Job placement • Biweekly workshops	• Individual counseling • Job site visits
Women for Human Rights and Dignity, Inc.*	• Assessment • Case management • Referral • Aftercare services for other employment opportunities	• Training and workshop enrichment • Job shadowing • Community mentoring
Ken-Ton ACCESS (North Hub)*	• Case management • Workplace assessment and programming • Coordination with DSS Job Clubs • Job development, job search, and job coaching • Development of on-the-job mentoring program • Referrals to other needed services • Workplace literacy	• Computer training and keyboarding • Vocational skills training • Writing, communication skills • Basic math and reading • ABE, GED, ESL • Noncredit classes
Erie 1 BOCES*		
Maryvale Community Education*		

SOURCE: Regional Employment Network. (1999). *Success through networking and partnering*. Buffalo, NY: Author.

vocational programs; career counseling; support services; and dealing with housing, parenting, health care, and crisis situations. Created under the state's Teen Services Act, the program cannot purchase services, but must rely on CBOs.

- ***Bridge***, a welfare-to-work program administered by the State University of New York's Educational Opportunity Centers.

Several of the employers that REN works with operate mentoring programs which, they indicated, improved retention markedly. Respondents recommended that these programs (which can be as simple as assigning a new employee to a supervisor with a similar background): (1) pay particular attention to the "match" between mentor and client; (2) pair new employees with relatively new workers, who have recently gone through the same experiences; and (3) specify the length of time that the relationship is to continue (since mentors may "burn out" if there is no end in sight). They noted, however, that mentoring programs can be costly, since they require a commitment of time from both mentors and new employees, and may be most suitable for large companies. In one particularly interesting mentoring effort, the state is funding five pilot efforts to match clients with volunteer mentors from a Literacy Volunteers of America program, who will assist with both work-related and other issues.

Resources

REN agencies, according to administrators, "could never provide a total program for any client with the small EDGE grant" that most receive. As Exhibit 4 indicates, support for specific activities comes from a wide variety of sources. As noted earlier, REN received a "Partnership" grant of $50,000, financed through a setaside of EDGE funds, to help develop its new information system. Administrators also planned to apply for federally funded Community Technology Center grants, which will support model programs that demonstrate the effectiveness of educational technology.

The number and type of staff employed by each REN member agency vary. Each of the four hubs, however, has a full-time coordinator who is responsible for interacting with employers. Administrators implemented this staffing configuration for the first time this year, and note that they may have to add more personnel to work with employers in the future.

Exhibit 4. REN Activities and Funding Sources

Funding	Description	Vocational education training	Work-based education	Work experience	Community service	Job readiness training, job search	Job development and placement	Post-employment services
Adult Education Act	Federal and state funds for adult basic education		✓					
Adult Literacy Education	State funds for adult basic education provided by agencies other than LEAs or BOCES		✓					
Bridge	State welfare-to-work funds administered by State University of New York's Educational Opportunity Centers	✓	✓					
Education for Gainful Employment	State formula grants to local Departments of Social Services, for education and training to welfare recipients	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Employment Preparation Education	State formula grants to local LEAs and BOCES for literacy, ESL, and life skills instruction for adults		✓	✓	✓	✓		
Equivalent Aid	State formula grants to local LEAs and BOCES for out-of-school youth		✓			✓		
Fee for Services	Payments from individuals or businesses	✓				✓		

Exhibit 4 (continued)

Funding	Description	Vocational education training	Work-based education	Work experience	Community service	Job readiness training, job search	Job development and placement	Post-employment services
Housing and Urban Development	Federal funds for services to residents of public housing		✓			✓	✓	
Job Training Partnership Act	Federal funds for employment training for disadvantaged individuals	✓				✓		
NY State Department of Labor	State funds for vocational training	✓						
Noncredit Remedial Education	State FTE funds for community college noncredit courses	✓						
Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act	Federal funds for vocational education programs and support services	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓
Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities	Federal and state funds	✓						
Welfare to Work	Federal and state funds	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

SOURCE: Regional Employment Network. (1999). *Success through networking and partnering*. Buffalo, NY: Author.

Outcomes

REN agencies use their resources to help Erie County DSS achieve the "job retention goal" set for it by the state's Departments of Education and Labor. The two departments calculate this goal for each county according to the combined amount of funds that it receives from several state-administered welfare-to-work programs (including EDGE, Bridge, and other competitive programs). The equation for calculating the goal is as follows:

Combined funds / $3,500 = county job retention goal.

Counties may define job retention as remaining employed for 90, 120, 150, or 180 calendar days; Erie County has chosen 90 days.

In the past, state administrators set a job retention goal for each EDGE agency. They found, however, that local organizations were not motivated to exceed their individual goals. By setting a countywide target, they have created an atmosphere in which, as one respondent explained, agencies view themselves as working for DSS instead of competing with each other. If DSS achieves its performance goals, it receives its full EDGE allocation from the state; if it does not, it has fewer dollars to distribute to local agencies. The REN agencies also track the number of individuals who participate in various activities. (See Exhibit 5 for a description of services for the year ending June 30, 1998.)

Implications

REN's experience offers a number of lessons concerning the context in which welfare-to-work programs operate, their organizational structures, the services they provide, the resources they require, and the outcomes they produce, including the following:

- ***A shared information system can promote collaboration***. As respondents pointed out, REN's data system "makes the provider neutral," since clients have access to the same services regardless of where they enter REN's employment and training system. By providing information about the performance of all member agencies, the data network also helps administrators identify gaps in services, and make better decisions about the particular roles that each organization should fulfill.

Exhibit 5. County Activities and Results: July 1, 1997 through June 30, 1998

Activity	Enrollment Target	Actual Enrollment
Assessment	259	804
Community services	0	0
Work-based education	249	565
Case management	140	1,133
Intern, externship	170	100
Work-based training	116	367
Vocational education	0	114
Job readiness training	497	806
Work experience	42	148
Job development, job placement	0	659
Post-employment services	0	0
Job development, job placement	219	42
Work-based education	0	2
Work-based training	0	0
Job search	0	13
Workplace literacy	0	1
Case management	0	274
90-day job retention	0	235

SOURCE: Regional Employment Network. (1999). *Success through networking and partnering*. Buffalo, NY: Author.

- ***By establishing local networks, welfare-to-work programs can offer a wider variety of programs and services.*** They may also be better able to respond to shifts in emphasis within the TANF program, or changes among the client population. Without this ability, some of the capacity of REN agencies might have been lost, as Erie County's DSS shifted from providing pre-employment services to a "work first" approach.
- ***Local administrators must define "collaboration" broadly*** if they are to successfully develop agency networks. Too often, one administrator observed, local entities think of collaboration as a relationship that involves only two agencies, rather than a network of providers.
- ***To retain participants, welfare-to-work programs need to create visible career ladders.*** Some REN agencies were negotiating articulation agreements with proprietary schools and community colleges, which allowed participants to move on to traditional certificate and degree programs.
- ***Welfare-to-work programs should not emphasize job-specific training at the expense of "soft" skills.*** One employer representative described an ECC curriculum known as Career and Success Training for Employment as "almost perfect," largely because it includes training in "soft" skills such as communication, team work, and

working with a supervisor. A former participant observed, "If you have attitude and attendance, companies will work with you."

- State administrators can promote the development of local networks by:
  - ***Providing local agencies with a model that they can adopt.*** New York officials worked with the state's ACCESS Centers to help them identify "Essential Features" of the ACCESS model, and to develop performance indicators that will help the Centers implement continuous improvement methodologies. As one administrator noted, local agencies must know what it means to be part of a partnership, and what they are expected to do.
  - ***Offering financial incentives.*** "To drive the field in a certain direction," one administrator explained, "the financial incentive must be there." In Erie County, each EDGE provider receives the same amount of funding that it did before the network was created. Individual agencies, however, can choose to provide specialized, rather than comprehensive, services.
  - ***Providing resources for system building and technology.*** Many local agencies, one state administrator noted, do not have the resources required to support the development of local agency networks. By providing funds for the development of partnerships and technology, New York facilitated the development of REN.

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Short-Term Job Training Programs

Daytona Beach Community College
Daytona Beach, Florida

Overview

The staff of Daytona Beach Community College's (DBCC) Division of Adult Education and Training have developed a series of short-term job training programs that are designed to provide welfare participants with skills needed to successfully join the workforce within the time limits imposed by current legislation. Staff from DBCC work collaboratively with representatives from a variety of local agencies (including the Workforce Development Board, Partnership for Workforce Development, Jobs and Benefits Offices, and area employers) to provide the programs, which include Building Maintenance, Computer Repair Technology, Customer Service, Food Preparation, Nail Technician, Office Support Technology, Patient Care Assistant, and Polyester Reinforced Fiberglass Manufacturing. Each program incorporates the "essential competencies" typically offered in the first portion of DBCC's advanced occupational certificate or Associate of Science degree programs. In conjunction with hands-on vocational training, the programs provide life and job readiness skills, work experience placements, and pre- and post-employment support services (including job placement and job coaching), as well as access to other community college resources (including the career development office, job fairs, and adult basic and secondary education).

Respondents noted that DBCC's short-term job training programs provide technical skills, enhanced self-esteem, social support, access to postsecondary education, and ultimately enable students to earn a living wage within a relatively short period of time. The programs have a retention rate of 93 percent, placement rate of 85 percent, and average starting wage of $7.00 per hour. Respondents attribute the success of the program to factors such as linking the competencies instilled by the program to the needs of the local workforce, preparing people for occupations with the potential for advancement, and targeting program services to those students with the ability to succeed.

Context

Florida serves its welfare participants through the Work and Gain Economic Self-Sufficiency (WAGES) program. A State Board of Directors oversees the program, which is a cooperative effort of the Departments of Labor and Employment Security, Children and Families, Health, Education, and Community Affairs, as well as Enterprise Florida and local WAGES coalitions. According to the State Board Office and Department of Labor and Employment Security, under WAGES:

- Recipients are limited to lifetime cash assistance of 48 months (this is shorter than the federal limit of 60 months) and subject to a two-year time limit within any 60 consecutive months; hardship exemptions are limited to a cumulative total of 12 months.
- Adults who receive cash assistance must participate in countable work activities for a minimum of 25 hours per week; parents in a two-parent family must participate in countable work activities for a minimum of 35 hours per week.
- Countable work activities include unsubsidized and subsidized employment (subsidized employment may include work supplementation, on-the-job training, work study, or paid work experience), community service, work experience combined with education, employment preparation, and vocational education and training.
- Vocational education and training as a countable work activity are limited to "basic skills and certification necessary for employment in an occupational area" and restricted to a total of 12 months. Customized training and education directly related to employment count toward participation only if an individual is also participating in another countable work activity for a minimum of 20 hours per week. Job search and employment preparation as a countable activity are limited to six weeks per fiscal year; job search or job readiness as a countable activity is limited to no more than four consecutive weeks.
- Teen parents must live at home or with another responsible adult and must stay in school in order to receive cash assistance.
- Recipients may receive assistance with transportation and child care, including transitional child care for up to two years after participation. WAGES also "provides incentives that encourage employment" (including an Earned Income wage supplement), as well as "employer incentives to encourage job creation and retention."

The State Board Office also reports that, since the enactment of WAGES, the number of families receiving cash assistance has declined 52 percent (from 200,292 in September 1996 to 96,501 in July 1998), and more than 113,000 former welfare participants have found jobs. The

average entry wage for these former welfare participants is $5.66 per hour (WAGES State Board Office, 1998; Florida Department of Labor and Employment Security, 1999).

All federal and state dollars used to implement WAGES are funneled through area Workforce Development Boards (there are 24 Boards statewide), which determine service needs, develop relevant policies, and distribute funding to service providers on a competitive bid basis. Within DBCC's service area (Flagler and Volusia Counties), the Partnership for Workforce Development, Inc., is one of several service providers contracted by the local Workforce Development Board. All individuals within the Board's service area who apply for public assistance are referred to the Partnership for work registration as part of their eligibility determination. The Partnership is responsible for referral counseling, job development, and case management (including training referrals, enrollment, support services, follow-up, and documentation) for these individuals. It receives referrals from and provides referrals to a number of public agencies including Departments of Children and Families and Vocational Rehabilitation, as well as State Employment agencies.

Respondents from the Workforce Development Board of Flagler and Volusia Counties and the Partnership for Workforce Development, Inc. indicated that Florida's welfare-to-work legislation does not currently adequately address the training needs of welfare participants. The projects administrator from the Workforce Development Board stated: "The bottom line is WorkFirst got a lot of people off the welfare rolls, but we need to look at whether they are making enough . . . . Training is a major component that we do need and need to expand." The Senior Trainer from the Partnership noted: "The law does provide a window of opportunity for individuals who meet specific criteria such as limited skills, limited work history, very limited opportunities for employment, but it is a very small number of individuals who actually fit into that window; for a very limited number of individuals training can be a primary activity." She added that current restrictions are "particularly difficult" for students enrolled or interested in a college degree program.

Staff members from DBCC's Division of Adult Education and Training expressed strong opposition to their state's approach to welfare reform. The Division Dean (head of the short-term job training programs) described Florida's welfare reform bill as "mean spirited," noting: "We should have had the opportunity to provide people with training before they went to work. People went to work who do not have skills to stay on those jobs or to move up within

those jobs . . . . And it's going to come back to hit us, because we've created a whole class of working poor people." The Dean also reported that only four of Florida's 28 community colleges are part of a one-stop system because "when Florida became a WorkFirst state, the community college sector got real turned off and just decided 'we're not gonna play in this'." He concluded by noting the shortcomings of equating decreased welfare participation with success:

> When you look at welfare reform and start measuring success by the number of people who leave the rolls, that is not the right criteria. We're talking about solving a multi-faceted problem with a single track criteria. We're saying that the program is a success because X number of people are no longer on the rolls. Well, that's not the answer to a very multifaceted problem. You're dealing with people who probably just are lost. There's this whole missing gap of people who are no longer on, not working, and nobody can find them. So, we've lost a large group in that process.

In reference to the impact of state legislation on the implementation of the short-term job training programs, the Dean reported that his staff members are not permitted to directly recruit welfare participants; applicants on welfare must be referred by a case manager, making the programs completely dependent upon the Partnership in terms of enrollment. The short-term job training programs coordinator added that welfare participants must experience a series of failures over the course of eight weeks (two weeks of unsuccessful job search, followed by two weeks of job club and no employment, followed by two weeks of assisted job search and no employment, followed by two weeks of intensive services and no employment) before training becomes an option for them. She concluded: "It's discouraging because many times we feel like we're swimming upstream. We have to spend time rebuilding these people's self-esteem before we can expect training to be beneficial."

Organizational Structure

DBCC's short-term job training programs are housed within its Division of Adult Education and Training. Staff members noted that their division is unique in that it integrates adult basic and secondary education and welfare-to-work programs. The division also administers a number of community outreach projects including adult education and job training for seniors aged 55 or over, career exploration and skills for at-risk middle and high school girls, violence reduction for juveniles involved with the criminal justice system, and support networks

for offenders released from state correctional facilities. The Dean explained that he uses a "community-oriented approach" to program development, and that his background in vocational education allows him "to pull people into the college who wouldn't normally come."

To develop the short-term job training programs, Adult Education and Training staff examined DBCC's occupational training and Associate of Science courses and "pulled the essential competencies together" for those occupations that presented job opportunities in the local community and were amenable to short-term training. The Partnership for Workforce Development furnished needed background information on the local labor market,[1] and DBCC's degree program instructors and Curriculum Review Committee assisted with curriculum development. According to the Dean, initially the idea of short-term training programs "threatened the faculty" as staff members feared that students would opt for short-term training versus degree programs. He noted that he overcame this barrier by reassuring his colleagues that the short-term job training programs would enable the college to serve a population that it would not normally serve and that had the potential to transition into degree programs.

To provide the short-term job training programs, the division works collaboratively with the Workforce Development Board of Flagler and Volusia Counties, the Partnership for Workforce Development, Inc., local Jobs and Benefits Offices, and area employers. The Workforce Development Board of Flagler and Volusia Counties is the fiscal agent for the grant (the board administers all JTPA and TANF funds within Flagler and Volusia counties).

According to the program coordinator, in addition to providing funds, the Board "keeps BCC staff on track." The Board's projects administrator added: "We work together to make sure both parties live up to the contract." The Partnership for Workforce Development, Inc., provides intake services and client referrals through its staff of approximately one dozen case workers; in exchange, DBCC conducts educational and occupational assessments for the Partnership as needed. Local Jobs and Benefits Offices assist with mass recruitment efforts and provide assistance with job placement for program participants. Area employers (including The Faneuil Group, Boston Communications, and First Data) provide job opportunities for program completers and input regarding curricula (staff continue to modify the competencies associated with each program to respond to changes in the local labor market). In addition to these partners,

[1] The Partnership for Workforce Development reported that travel and tourism provide the bulk of jobs in the Daytona Beach area and that this "creates many seasonal service jobs, high turnover, low pay." Most area employers operate small to mid-size businesses, and unemployment is relatively low.

the Deland Housing Authority, Palmetto Place Housing Development (Daytona Beach), and Project Achieve (Pierson) all provide facilities that enable DBCC to offer short-term job training program courses off-campus.

The Dean reported that he is happy with the relationships between the community college and its welfare-to-work partners. He explained: "The college pretty much has been able to sort of provide some cohesiveness to the group . . . . The college became kind of the neutral ground because we weren't trying to get anybody's money or business. I just really wanted to run training programs — I'm not trying to control the system." He added that DBCC and its collaborative partners are in the process of putting together their memorandum of understanding (required by the Workforce Investment Act) delineating what each party contributes to their welfare-to-work partnership; in DBCC's case, he explained, contributions include assessment services, adult education and vocational training, as well as office space for case managers from the Partnership for Workforce Development.

Services

The Partnership for Workforce Development refers almost all of DBCC's short-term job training program participants (the Departments of Vocational Rehabilitation and Children and Families also provide some referrals). Case workers from the Partnership interview and develop Individual Service Strategies for area welfare participants. Their interview addresses the individual's employment history, education and training history, barriers to employment, and occupational skills and interests, as well as family functioning. Partnership case workers refer eligible and interested applicants to the short-term job training programs' coordinator for additional information about the programs and the registration process. Upon referral, DBCC conducts a variety of assessments on prospective students including the full Test of Adult Basic Skills (TABE) and vocational assessments (e.g., SAGE).

DBCC designed its short-term job training programs specifically to serve welfare participants; other economically disadvantaged adults, and, in some cases (e.g., Building Maintenance, Computer Repair Technology), dislocated workers also participate in the programs. Staff members reported their students are predominantly female and that 50 to 60 percent are welfare recipients. Students range from 18 to 58 years of age. The programs do not serve teen parents because, according to the program coordinator, the targeted jobs require that applicants

be at least 18 years of age. The students whom we interviewed emphasized their desire to "make a living wage," "learn skills," "get a better job," and support their families.

The short-term training programs do not require a high school diploma or work experience; however, each program does have minimum entrance requirements in terms of reading, math, and language abilities as measured by the TABE. These levels range from sixth to tenth grade, depending on the particular program of interest (Exhibit 1). The Dean explained that his staff derived these levels from the readability of course textbooks and materials, noting: "It's a travesty to let people go into something that they're not prepared for." Applicants with low TABE scores may enroll in the college's Vocational Preparatory Instruction labs prior to (if scores are *more* than one grade level below the minimum entrance requirements) or concurrently with (if scores are *less* than one grade level below the minimum entrance requirements) their vocational skills training.

Exhibit 1. DBCC's Short-Term Job Training Programs: Minimum Entrance Requirements

Program	Minimum TABE Score Required		
	Reading	Math	Language
Building Maintenance	8th grade	8th grade	7th grade
Computer Repair Technology	9th grade	9th grade	9th grade
Customer Service	8th grade	7th grade	8th grade
Food Preparation	7th grade	7th grade	7th grade
Nail Technician	8th grade	8th grade	9th grade
Office Support Technology	8th grade	7th grade	8th grade
Patient Care Assistant (165 hours)*	7th grade	6th grade	7th grade
(290 hours)*	10th grade	9th grade	10th grade
Polyester Reinforced Fiberglass Manufacturing	8th grade	8th grade	8th grade

*In addition to grade level scores, applicants to the Patient Care Assistance programs must pass a CPR course and tuberculosis test, and be vaccinated against Hepatitis B.

DBCC's short-term job training programs include Building Maintenance, Computer Repair Technology, Customer Service, Food Preparation, Nail Technology, Office Support Technology, Patient Care Assistant, and Polyester Reinforced Fiberglass Manufacturing. Exhibit 2 describes the goal and areas of emphasis associated with each program. According to program staff, the local Workforce Development Board projects significant growth in

Exhibit 2. DBCC's Short-Term Job Training Programs: Program Descriptions

Building Maintenance *Students will be prepared to work as maintenance custodial personnel.* Carpentry, electric, basic plumbing, heating and air conditioning, masonry , painting, cleaning, grounds care and irrigation, basic swimming pool maintenance, use and care of hand and power tools.	*Duration*: 16wks *Fees*: $738.95 *Wage*: $6-$7 hr
Computer Repair Technology *Students will be prepared to work at entry-level positions as computer assemblers, sales representatives, and service technicians.* Hardware system components, operating systems, user interfaces, personal computer assembly, installation of operating systems and applications software, DC/AC and digital electronics, use of applications software, soldering and desoldering, cable fabrication, circuit board repair and layout, chassis layout, final testing and troubleshooting.	*Duration*: 32wks *Fees*: $819.00 *Wage*: $7-$8 hr
Customer Service Representative *Prepare students for employment in the rapidly growing field of customer service.* Techniques for selling services, listening skills, telephone activities (maintaining a log, screening calls, etiquette), interpersonal skills, keyboarding techniques, basic computer operations, basic communication skills.	*Duration*: 4wks *Fees*: $145.00 *Wage*: $6-$8 hr
Food Preparation *Students will be prepared to work as institutional or short order cooks and kitchen assistants.* History of modern cuisine, menu development and planning, kitchen safety and sanitation, weights and measures, kitchen protocol and equipment, recipes and recipe conversion, cutting and cooking, quantity food preparation.	*Duration*: 16wks *Fees*: $470.23 *Wage*: $5.50-$7 hr
Nail Technician *Prepare students for state board examination in nail technician specialist.* Fundamental skills and techniques of manicuring, pedicuring, and nail extension; Florida law as it pertains to cosmetology; basic salon management; sterilization and sanitation, structure and diseases of the nail, theory of massage.	*Duration*: 16wks *Fees*: $612.44 *Wage*: $6-$7 hr
Office Support Technology *Students will be prepared to work as a general clerk, typist or receptionist in a medical, legal, or general office.* Verbal and written communications, basic office skills, appropriate office personnel and customer relations, keyboarding, word processing.	*Duration*: 16wks *Fees*: $520.37 *Wage*: $6.50-$8 hr
Patient Care Assistant *Students will be eligible for the state certification examination for nursing assistants.* Physical and emotional needs of the patient, medical terminology, infection control, bed making, vital signs, personal hygiene, lifting and moving, rehabilitation, nutrition, gastro-intestinal system, bowel, and urinary elimination, heat and cold applications, care of the elderly, common health problems, basic emergency care, dying patient care.	*Duration*: 16wks *Fees*: $514.73 (165hrs) $644.52 (290hrs) *Wage*: $6-$7 hr
Polyester Reinforced Fiberglass Manufacturing *Students will be prepared to work for a polyester reinforced manufacturing company.* Building of all fiberglass products (boats, pools, automotive and aircraft subcomponents), personal safety, ecological impact, basic shop skills, exposure to tools.	*Duration*: 5wks *Fees*: $500.30 *Wage*: $8.50-$9.50 hr

occupations associated with several of these programs including manicurists (59 percent), food preparation specialists (42 percent), nursing assistants (41 percent), and home health aides (24 percent). Several staff members also reported that large customer service calling centers have recently become a major local employer

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As Exhibit 2 indicates, the short-term job training programs range from four to 32 weeks in length (five of the eight programs are 16 weeks in length) and prepare participants for jobs with an entry-level wage between $5.50 and $9.50 per hour. Program fees range from $145 to $819; costs include assessment, registration, tuition, and lab fees, as well as money for books and equipment. According to the Dean, WAGES (or, in the case of Nail Technology, vocational waivers from the community college) covers all program costs for welfare participants. DBCC offers both day and evening courses for several of the short-term job training programs including Computer Repair Technology, Food Preparation, Nail Technician, and Patient Care Assistant. The college also offers day, evening, and Saturday Office Support Technology courses. DBCC offers program courses through its four campuses (the Main

Campus in Daytona Beach, the West Campus in Deland, the South Campus in New Smyrna Beach, and the Four Townes Campus in Debary), as well as at the Deland Housing Authority (Deland), Palmetto Place Housing Development (Daytona Beach), and Project Achieve facilities (Pierson).

According to program staff, the curriculum for each of the short-term job training programs is "hands-on" and provided "in a learning environment conducive to the development of positive workplace behaviors and attitudes." Hands-on instruction is supplemented by textbook assignments; an instructor emphasized the importance of the textbooks, noting that they require that students learn to read and follow directions. Staff members reported that students work at their own pace and rely on their peers for assistance. They added that the programs are "mastery programs"; students must redo assignments until they master them and are then permitted to move on to subsequent topics.

Life skills and job readiness are integrated into the programs through workshops and other activities that enable participants to identify their strengths and skills as well as develop letters and resumes and prepare for interviews. One instructor, for example, requires that her students come to class each day prepared to present four things they are grateful for, one act of kindness they have witnessed, one personal goal, and one work goal. She also requires that her students dress for the workplace, call if they will be late for class, and warn her of absences in advance. Classroom guest speakers include local business persons (who discuss issues such as running a business and what they look for in an employee) as well as a representative from Mary Kay who provides free make overs. Students also take field trips to nearby businesses (including

one of the area's largest new employers, Boston Communications) and tours of the DBCC campus.

In conjunction with vocational training, the programs provide participants with work experience placements (which satisfy the state requirement that welfare participants work in conjunction with receiving vocational training) and, when needed, adult education. Participants also have access to the community college's career development office, job fairs, and "interview boutique" (a collection of clothing donated by faculty members and their spouses from which participants select two to three outfits to keep after they have completed their training). On-site support services are provided through the "Living Room," a monthly get together organized by instructors which facilitates informal networking among program participants and "serves as a general support group." Welfare participants receive other needed support services (such as transportation and reduced-rate child care) through WAGES. After completing the program, former students have access to job placement services, as well as job coaching.

Resources

DBCC's Dean of Adult Education and Training oversees the short-term job training and other programs offered by the division; he also serves as the Head of the Occupational Deans for Florida's community college system. Program staff members include a program coordinator and job developer, as well as classroom instructors. The Dean stated that he would like to add professional mental health counselors to his short-term job training staff because "students have incredible amounts of barriers and need counselors during training and beyond." In addition to program staff, some responsibilities associated with the programs are handled by local case managers from the Partnership for Workforce Development (who assess student eligibility, provide referrals, and track applicants) and an Assessment Specialist and Technicians from the community college (who provide assessment services).

The program coordinator's responsibilities include student registration, staff supervision and assistance, budget management, and project reporting. The job developer establishes relationships with area employers and assists students with applications and interviews. Program instructors serve as "on-site case managers, mentors, counselors, role models, and resource persons" as well as teachers. The program coordinator noted that she encourages all of her staff members to participate in workshops and other training opportunities and that she holds bi-

monthly meetings with instructors to enable them to share ideas and techniques. She is also considering implementing co-teaching days to further facilitate teacher collaboration.

The Workforce Development Board of Flagler and Volusia Counties is the fiscal agent for DBCC's short-term job training programs grant. This grant is performance-based; according to the Dean, "performance includes completion, placement, and retention." The Board's projects administrator reported that DBCC's accountability is "informal and mostly interpersonal." She added that DBCC's grant proposal does, however, stipulate benchmarks that program staff work toward during the fiscal year; these benchmarks address enrollment, completion, placement, starting wages, and 60- and 90-day retention. Program staff periodically provide information on their progress toward these benchmarks to the Board which, in turn, reports to the state. The state compiles data from all of its Workforce Development Boards and feeds this information back for purposes of comparison and improvement.

As Exhibit 3 indicates, the short-term job training programs grant monies are used exclusively for program operations; the community college provides funds for staff salaries and benefits as well as several services in-kind (including the facility, maintenance, and utilities). Staff members estimate a per participant cost of $418 (based on an average of $271 for tuition and $147 for materials); however, this cost does not factor in the value of staff salaries, operations costs outside of tuition and materials, or services in kind.

Exhibit 3. DBCC's Short-Term Job Training Programs: 1998-99 Budget

Cost Category		Workforce Board	DBCC
Personnel			$27,905
Operations	Maintenance Repair		In-Kind
	Office Supplies	$1,000	
	Postage	$200	
	Printing	$1,000	
	Rent Lease		In-Kind
	Staff Travel	$1,000	
	Telephone	$225	
	Training Materials	$42,784	
	Tuition	$79,239	
	Utilities		In-Kind
Total		$125,448	$27,905+

Outcomes

According to DBCC's short-term training programs grant, staff proposed to serve 292 participants through 29 classes and place 248 participants (85 percent) at an average wage of $7.00 per hour during the 1998 to 1999 fiscal year. At the time of our visit (Spring 1999), staff estimated that they had served over 125 students during the fiscal year. The Dean emphasized that he was very displeased with enrollment, noting that only four of the eight short-term job training programs (Computer Repair Technology, Office Support Technology, Patient Care Assistant, and Polyester Reinforced Fiberglass Manufacturing) currently had the minimum number of applicants required to offer program courses. He attributed this low enrollment to his staff's inability to recruit students given current WAGES legislation (discussed earlier under *Context*).

In reference to retention, the program coordinator reported: "the drop out rate is minimal — for every 15 students, we lose one," providing an estimated retention rate of 93 percent. She also reported that, as proposed, staff have placed 85 percent of program completers and explained that this average varies by program (Office Support Technology, for example, places 80 to 85 percent of its participants while Patient Care Assistant places 90 to 95 percent). The Dean reported that while he was not pleased with the starting salaries associated with these placements early on in the programs' development (in 1995 to 1996, for example, the average entry wage was $5.60 per hour), lately the program has had "good starting salaries." According to the program coordinator, these salaries do, as proposed, average out to $7.00 per hour.

The job developer described the market for program completers as "very good" and noted that the most challenging aspect of his job is reassuring students that they are ready to work, despite their intimidation about the interview process. He added that area employers are very receptive to hiring program completers, and attributed their positive response to DBCC's reputation. The job developer emphasized that the need for child care and transportation are the biggest barriers to moving persons off welfare and into the workforce. He noted that while program staff do their best to accommodate these needs for participants, these barriers linger when students complete the program and move on to a job.

All of our respondents associated positive student outcomes with DBCC's short-term job training programs. Instructors noted that program completers are "technically capable" with "good self-esteem and a good support system." The students we interviewed reported that, through the program, they had developed self-confidence and met others they could depend on

for support. One student explained: "We use each other as a sounding board for advice and reassurance." A second added: "We all work together and help each other." The senior trainer at the Partnership for Workforce Development stated: "DBCC has done a good job of identifying demand occupations that provide living wages . . . . You can take someone with limited work experience (e.g., fast food) and, with just 16 weeks of training, move them into a job where they can earn a living wage."

Program staff members noted that, because the short-term job training programs are based on postsecondary vocational education programs, they enable participants to earn vocational credits at the college as well as a certificate describing the program completed and its length. Two of the programs, Nail Technician and Patient Care Assistant, also qualify participants for state board examinations. In addition, because the programs are derived from existing certificate programs which, as a group, offer a series of occupational completion points that enable individuals to exit and enter training as needed, completers may transition smoothly into the college's advanced occupational certificate and Associate of Science degree programs as their needs permit. The program coordinator cautioned, however, that presently the percentage of participants who move into postsecondary education is low (she estimated 5 percent):

> The programs are set up to get people jobs . . . . We do encourage them to return but, let's face it, the government says they have to get a job so that's the number one priority. Really for this population, when you consider all the barriers that they have overcome to get where they are, to have a full-time job and to stay at it consistently, take care of their families, become responsible, that is just such an accomplishment that you find very few who, after that, come back to school for more.

Implications

The Dean reported that the key to the success of DBCC's short-term job training programs is the link between the competencies instilled by the program and the needs of the local workforce. He explained:

> The key to it is to gather up the competencies and make sure that you're giving competencies that relate to the marketable work world . . . . The private sector has got to be able to play a key part in all this. We cannot be in the business of training for training's sake anymore. I can't start up a training program thinking maybe people will get placed. I've got to call up employers and say 'Hey, this is

> what's happening, this is how many people come out each month, where are the jobs gonna be?"

The Dean also noted the importance of enhancing the self-esteem and lifestyle choices of students:

> Once [participants] make personal adjustments, they can succeed. We have got to frame these programs so that the student really gets a sense of bringing something into the workplace, and help them to articulate that . . . . There is such a different kind of lifestyle that these people need to adjust to; they really need to look at personal adjustment issues and make the kinds of decisions that are going to work for them in the future.

Other elements of program success cited by the Dean include preparing people for occupations with the potential for advancement, and linking adult basic and vocational education.

The Dean emphasized that "surviving WorkFirst" requires that training programs:

- facilitate employer involvement (through focus groups, on-site adult education, incentives, employer breakfasts, customized training, and specialized recruitment and screening);
- use the realities of the workplace to promote job readiness (through mechanisms such as networking, job coaching, and case management for new workers); and
- recognize the barriers to successful participation in training and employment (most notably the lack of affordable high-quality child care and transportation).
-

In addition, various staff members suggested that programs can benefit from screening applicants and targeting program services to those students with the ability to succeed. The program coordinator explained: "Make sure you screen the people who go into the class. If you put people into the class and they really don't belong there, you're setting people up for failure. If they need remediation, do that first."

When asked about the future of DBCC's short-term job training programs, the Dean stated: "I want more customized training. I want employers to interview people before they go into a training program and say 'Hey, if you make it through this program you've got a job,' because I think that's when you're going to get maximum participation and you're really going to get people who are motivated." He noted that this presently occurs within the Polyester Reinforced Fiberglass Manufacturing program, where a local boat lamination company provides

participants with a salary during training as well as a job upon completion. The program coordinator reported that they have had a similar arrangement for Patient Care Assistant students in the past. The Dean is also considering adding a short-term job training program in Hospitality during the next fiscal year. He explained that hospitality is the area's most prominent employer, and, while the industry is associated with low wages, Daytona Beach's low unemployment and influx of call centers have prompted several hotels to raise wages.

In addition to the short-term training programs, the Dean would like to serve welfare participants through other mechanisms. He would like to implement a job coaching program for incumbent workers that would allow DBCC to work closely with area businesses in establishing career ladders and providing on-site training for employees. In addition, at the time of our research, staff were piloting a new project designed to provide welfare participants with particularly low achievement scores with individualized remedial instruction as well as vocational skills. Program activities include a work experience assignment and adult education classes, as well as brown bag sessions that address life skills issues. Staff reported that enrollment and retention within the pilot were low, and attribute this to the target population's negative experiences with education and low self-esteem ("They don't want to go into school — they may want to go into skills training but they definitely don't want adult education because they've failed in that arena — so that's our challenge now," Dean; "For some it seems more feasible for them to deal with their money being taken away than to go back to school," program coordinator). While the pilot project was not as successful as anticipated, the Workforce Development Board funded DBCC to continue its work on this project during the upcoming fiscal year. The Dean concluded that, despite the many barriers to success, he will continue his efforts to serve welfare participants through the community college, and hopes that other vocational programs will continue their efforts as well:

> I agree that some of the programs in the past didn't work, but I think that one of the biggest problems is that we design programs with a rehabilitation process in mind and what we're doing with this is habilitating; we're giving people their first exposure toward responsibility, first exposure toward the world of work, and if we don't start from zip, we're not going to be able to implement programs that are really going to touch people . . . . We're getting down to the people who are in this culture of poverty and until we can holistically put together the services that will habilitate people, then I'm not sure that we're going to ever get the job done totally.

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St. Louis Works
The St. Louis Works Partnership
St. Louis, Missouri

Overview

The Washington, DC-based America Works Partnership is a national nonprofit organization created by building trades unions to encourage low-income individuals to enter registered apprenticeships. As a local affiliate, Saint Louis Works (SLW) offers residents of a nine-county area surrounding St. Louis the opportunity to apprentice in any of 22 building trades (although most participants to date have entered the carpenters' program). Individuals who enroll in SLW complete a one-week orientation, which provides them with a general introduction to the building trades, covering topics such as job safety, blueprint reading, and construction terminology. Next, they are referred to contractors who are currently hiring entry-level apprentices. Those who meet union entrance requirements become registered apprentices, combining work and classroom training for a period of three to five year.[1]

To help applicants prepare for the entry-level math tests that unions require, SLW provides math tutoring sessions that have greatly improved participants' passing rates. In cooperation with St. Louis Community College, the program is also pilot-testing a six-week "work readiness" component for those who need to improve their basic skills before they begin orientation. Its Executive Director reported that, by fall, SLW hoped to be located in a developing "Technology Park" along with other employment and training providers. At this site — which will offer day care and medical services — the agencies will share a single recruiter, operate an assessment center, and make referrals for support services.

Saint Louis was part of America Works' first demonstration program (known as the "Resident Apprenticeship Demonstration Program"), which operated in 21 cities between 1995 and 1998. Supported by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the demonstration program limited participation to residents of public housing projects. SLW, however, is open to any individual who is unemployed, underemployed, or wants to make a

[1] Since Missouri is not a right-to-work state, all construction workers must join a union.

career change to the construction industry. About one-third of those who attended recruiting sessions during its first few months of operation were welfare recipients. The program, however, has little contact with Missouri's welfare agency at either the state or local levels.

Context

State

Missouri, which enacted state welfare legislation in 1994, is currently operating its *Families Mutual Responsibility Plan* under a federal waiver that will expire on June 30, 2000. Until the waiver expires, the state will continue to offer a number of work activities in addition to those defined by PRWORA, including adult basic education, English as a Second Language instruction, and postsecondary education. TANF recipients are exempt from work requirements if they have a child under the age of one year, and are required to work only 20 hours a week if the child is under the age of six. The state does not have an income disregard, although a bill before the legislature at the time of our visit would have established one.

The state vocational education administrator whom we interviewed reported that his department had excellent working relationships with both the state's Division of Family Services, which administers the TANF program, and its Economic Development Administration, which manages welfare-to-work funds from the U.S. Department of Labor. He identified a number of ways in which Perkins funds benefit the TANF population in Missouri, including support for: (1) adult basic education services at a dozen sites; (2) single-parent displaced homemaker programs (called "New Perspectives"), which offer testing, counseling, support services, and tuition reimbursement; (3) child care services; (4) an accredited Child Development Associate program; and (5) some apprenticeship programs.

The state welfare agency administrator we interviewed indicated that the Department of Social Services had been heavily involved in development of Missouri's one-stop career centers. She reported that reorganization planned for July 1999 would create a new Division of Workforce Development (within the Department of Economic Development), which would assume responsibility for the centers. At the time of our visit, however, the state still had Private Industry Councils, rather than Workforce Investment Boards.

Local

St. Louis Works serves the St. Louis metropolitan area, the 18th largest Metropolitan Statistical Area in the U.S. The area includes nine counties[2] with a population of about 2.5 million and numerous separate units of local government. Its overall unemployment rate is quite low: around four percent, according to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. According to St. Louis' Regional Commerce and Growth Association, more than 70,000 new jobs have been created since January 1995. Most, however, are in suburban areas; the region's metropolitan planning organization reports that, in 1997, less than one-quarter of the region's jobs were city-based. As a result, unemployment rates in some areas of the city are as high as 41 percent (Hinds, undated).

The demand for construction workers is especially strong due to several major projects, including:

- A $2.6 million expansion of the city's airport, Lambert Field;
- Demolition of the Darst-Webbe Housing Project, with new construction to replace the facility, supported by a $47 million "Hope VI" grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; and
- Work on a new civic center and county jail, along with redevelopment of downtown warehouses.

Most construction projects involve federal, state, or city funding, and include incentives for minority participation. The city sets a target of 25 percent involvement for minority contractors and workers, and five percent involvement for women. Both groups, however, are underrepresented among the area's construction workers: those we interviewed estimated that, although the city's population is 17 percent Black, only four to five percent of its construction workers are minorities, and less than one percent are women.

Construction workers are in short supply due to both the aging of the existing labor pool and high attrition rates in the industry. The average construction worker in the area is in his early 50s. In the past, construction workers' children often entered their father's trade; now, they are less likely to do so. According to SLW's Executive Director, 30 to 35 percent of all new workers leave the trades within their first four to six weeks of employment. As a result of these factors,

[2] Franklin, Jefferson, St. Charles, and St. Louis counties in Missouri, and Clinton, Jersey, Madison, Monroe, and St. Clair counties in Illinois.

hundreds of workers come to St. Louis every day from Tennessee, Arkansas, and Indiana to perform jobs that could be filled by area residents.

In addition to its independent efforts, SLW is participating in the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Jobs Initiative, which involves six cities (including, in addition to St. Louis, Denver, New Orleans, Philadelphia, Seattle, and Milwaukee). In this initiative, SLW is a subcontractor to the metropolitan planning organization and regional council of governments, The East-West Gateway Coordinating Council (EWGCC).[3] The head of the carpenters' union was involved in the 17-month planning process for the initiative, which is designed to improve the access of disadvantaged young adults to family-supporting employment. The planning group identified construction, which offers access to good wages without a great deal of formal education, as one critical employment area. (The Jobs Initiative also offers training in health care and business services, as well as a program that places participants in jobs within walking distance of the city's light rail and bus stations.) During a recent three-month period, 26 percent of the individuals placed in employment by Jobs Initiative programs (including SLW) were TANF clients.

Organizational Structure

Participating agencies and organizations

SLW, according to its Executive Director, is ". . .more of an economic development effort than a job training program." The Mission Statement of the nonprofit St. Louis Works Partnership, which governs the program, reflects this emphasis (see Exhibit 1). The Partnership, created in May 1997, is governed by a 35-member Board of Directors that meets monthly, and includes representatives of labor unions, employers, banks, local government, and community-based organizations (see Exhibit 2). Its only paid staff member is the Executive Director, who is responsible for recruitment and assessment, as well as for planning instruction and for interagency coordination.

[3] EWGCC's primary areas of interest include transportation, labor market initiatives, and sustainable growth

Exhibit 1. St. Louis Works Partnership Mission Statement

The St. Louis Works Partnership will act as a catalyst to link St. Louis' diverse workforce to career opportunities in the building trades and related industries and support long-term sustainable economic development and growth in the Greater St. Louis Area.

To accomplish this, St. Louis Works Partnership will:

1. Work in partnership with labor, business, government, and community organizations.
2. Establish and implement a policy agenda that will identify and work to remove barriers to the sustained economic development and growth of the St. Louis community.
3. Establish pathways to careers in the construction industry for minorities, women, and other non-traditional workers.

Exhibit 2. Organizations Represented on the Saint Louis Works Partnership Board

Blumenfeld, Kaplan, Sandweiss, PC (law firm)
Builders ProLoan (financing for new Homes built with union labor)
Building and Construction Trades Council
Carpenters' Joint Apprenticeship Council
Carpenters' District Council
Commerce Bank
Construction Training School
County Executive's Office
Ecumenical Housing Production Corp. (low-income housing and client support services)
Electrical Industry Training School
Enhanced Urban Services, Inc.
Home Builders' Association
J. S. Alberici Construction Co.
Mayor's Office
McCormack Baron and Associates (development company)
Mercantile Bank
Mosley Construction
NationsBank
Painters' District Council
PRIDE of St. Louis (labor-management Partnership)
Real Estate and Investments
Regional Commerce and Growth Association (chamber of commerce and economic development organization)
Sheet Metal Workers' Union
St. Louis 2004 (nonprofit agency interested in civic, environmental, and employment issues)
St. Louis Council of Construction Consumers
St. Louis County Economic Council
St. Louis Housing Authority
St. Louis University (program evaluation)
Taylor Morley, Inc. (residential builders)
United Way of Greater St. Louis
Ward Chapel AME Church
Washington University
Waterhout Construction

During our visit, SLW's Executive Director reported that the program hoped to relocate to the city's new Wellston Technology Park by fall 1999. The park, a "Brownfields" site,[4] is part of an economically depressed "Enterprise Community" that received a $3 million grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Administrators for the county, which owns the Wellston facility, believe that the state's Department of Economic Development will provide funding for a multi-purpose facility at Wellston. The state is currently in the process of deciding what agencies should be housed there; however, they are likely to include:

- ***Cornerstone,*** which is already located at Wellston, and provides training for high-performance machinist jobs;
- ***WorkLink*** (another program involved in the Casey Initiative), which offers six-to 12-month programs that prepare participants for jobs available within walking distance of the city's "MetroLink" (light rail and bus) stations;
- ***A GED program*** provided by St. Louis Community College; and
- ***Agencies that provide day care and medical services.***

The Wellston Center, according to SLW's Executive Director, will be loosely modeled on Detroit's Focus Hope program, which also trains machinists. (Focus Hope, however, offers a wide array of support services.) At the center, agencies will share a single recruiter, operate an assessment center, and make referrals for support services such as drug and alcohol counseling. They may also offer a "work readiness" component for those who need help with basic skills, or who are undecided about career choices, and consider letting applicants participate in one-week tryouts for specific training programs. Administrators hope that several hundred students will complete Wellston programs each year, with residents of the Enterprise Community zone being a principal target for recruiters.

Services

Participant characteristics

SLW recruits individuals who are unemployed, underemployed, or want to make a career change to the construction industry. The program is open to any resident who is 18 years of age, has reliable transportation, has a strong work ethic, can pass a drug screening test, and meets the

[4] "Brownfields" are contaminated industrial sites. St. Louis received $200,000 in funding from the Environmental Protection Agency's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative to help reclaim this site.

entrance requirements of individual apprenticeship programs, which include entry-level math tests. About one-third of those who attended recruiting sessions during its first few months of operation were welfare recipients.

The entrance requirements for some trades (e.g., electrician, pipefitter, and sheet metal worker) require a high school diploma plus specific math courses. However, any individual who can pass the entry-level math test can usually be placed in a trade that has less-demanding requirements.

Of the 64 SLW participants who obtained apprenticeship positions in 1998, 59 were minorities and 15 were women. The program has experienced some difficulty in recruiting and retaining women: only about half of the females that it has recruited have eventually gone to work in construction. At the time of our visit, the current class of 18 included only two women. One of the union representatives we interviewed observed that women were more likely to be interested in, and successful at, work that does not call for great physical strength; e.g., careers as painters, electricians, and operating engineers.

As noted earlier, SLW — unlike the original America Works programs — does not limit participation to residents of public housing projects. The individuals we interviewed cited both advantages and disadvantages to this approach. By recruiting through a variety of organizations (including the city and county housing authorities), the program is able to recruit a large pool of candidates. Further, as one individual we interviewed indicated, 90 percent of heads of households in St. Louis public housing units are women, many of whom may not be interested in careers in construction. However, a representative of the Painters' Union, which had offered two on-site classes at public housing projects, noted that the housing authority's Office of Self-Sufficiency provided a number of services at no cost to the union, including: (1) basic skills instruction; (2) drug screening; (3) case management, including assistance with transportation problems; and (4) assistance in recruiting and interviewing prospective participants.

SLW receives referrals from a number of agencies, including housing authorities, the Urban League, and a local YouthBuild program. However, the program recruits most of its participants through orientation sessions that the Executive Director holds at a variety of sites. Newspaper articles (especially those appearing in several periodicals that target African Americans) announcing where he will be usually produce a number of calls: one that appeared a week before our visit resulted in calls from 75 individuals, although only four appeared to take

the math test. At recruiting sessions, SLW's Executive Director is usually accompanied by a representative of the construction industry, or one of two former military recruiters who sometimes assist him. (These individuals, he noted, ". . .can be tough and handle [people] with kid gloves at the same time.")

A minority contractor whom we interviewed observed that SLW benefits employers by saving them recruitment costs, and by preventing them from investing in training for individuals who do not "buy into" the requirements of the job. Further, she noted, employers may be prohibited from asking (or unwilling to ask) about an individual's welfare status in order to take advantage of incentives such as tax credits. "The most important thing to us is attitude and willingness. Training happens mostly on the job. Skills are teachable, but if you have attitude and willingness, there is a place for you somewhere."

Description of services

SLW offers the individuals it recruits a one-week orientation program and access to tutoring classes that help them prepare for entry-level math tests. In addition, it is working with St. Louis Community College on a trial job-readiness program that will expose participants to a variety of career choices. SLW will also provide assistance with transportation and referrals for support services.

Instructional program. Individuals who enroll in SLW complete a one-week orientation that is offered every six weeks, which provides them with a general introduction to the building trades, covering topics such as job safety, blueprint reading, and construction terminology. Orientation also familiarizes participants with the advantages and disadvantages of a career in construction, including the seasonal nature of the work, the possibility of work stoppages, and the need to save for periods when there is no work. It is important to help participants understand the nature of construction work, one respondent observed, since high wages in the field may attract individuals who will not remain in the field.

After orientation, participants are referred to contractors who are currently hiring entry-level apprentices. Those who meet union entrance requirements become registered apprentices, combining work and classroom training for a period of three to five years.

To help participants prepare for entry-level math tests required by the unions, SLW (using United Way funds) offers Saturday math tutoring sessions in cooperation with St. Louis Community College. Although nearly half of prospective participants initially failed the math

tests, the tutoring sessions have helped raise the percentage who pass to about 75 percent. The instructor, a journeyman carpenter, uses the same book that the carpenter's apprentice program uses ("Mathematics for Carpenters," by Robert Bradford). An average of 15 people attend each session; those who come at least twice are allowed to keep their books (valued at $35). SLW pays the college $1,100 for the 12-hour program and use of its facilities; participants are charged $15 each.

A short orientation is important, one respondent noted, for individuals who need to get to work quickly. SLW recognized, however, that some participants would require more extensive preparation, and initially planned to offer two "tracks": (1) an "industry-ready" track lasting one week, and (2) a "hands-on" track lasting two to six months. Although it has not implemented the second track due to funding constraints, SLW is currently working with St. Louis Community College on a trial six-week job preparation program. During the first two weeks, the college will do assessment and expose participants to a variety of career choices, including jobs in construction, manufacturing, and medical fields. At the time of our visit, 18 of 60 participants in the program (which was in its second week) had expressed interest in construction work. For these individuals, the curriculum in weeks three through five will focus on math for construction; SLW will provide orientation during the final week.

Support services. Several of the individuals we interviewed noted that SLW was trying to avoid "becoming a program"; i.e., it was trying to refer participants to services provided by other agencies, rather than providing all support services itself. Nevertheless, the Executive Director has found it necessary to address the transportation problems that keep some individuals from reaching jobs that are not on public transportation routes. SLW has also contacted the St. Louis University law school about the possibility of establishing a civil law clinic to help participants with problems such as parking tickets and child support issues.

At the time of our visit, the program was about to pilot a "motor pool," which will allow apprentices to pick up cars at the city's MetroLink stations, returning them at night. Participants will be allowed to "borrow" a car for about 10 weeks on the condition that they deposit 15 percent of their take-home pay into an Individual Development Account. The program hopes to match each dollar that the employee deposits with 50 cents from other sources, so that apprentices will have enough money to buy a used car at the end of the 10-week period. It is important, the Executive Director noted, to transport workers to job sites in such a way that "they

don't appear different"; i.e., participants in job training programs should not arrive in agency vans.

Post-employment services. "First-term" apprentices in the carpenters' four-year program work on residential or commercial job sites for five and one-half months, then attend the union's training school for two weeks. The apprentice's employer pays his regular wages during this period; participants receive only a $10 stipend for transportation from union funds. The school offers 100 "skill blocks" covering beginning, intermediate, and advanced topics in residential and commercial areas; the ones that an apprentice selects depend to some extent upon the type of work that he is doing. Apprentices must complete 750 hours of work experience and eight skill blocks in order to advance through each of eight terms (6,000 hours of work experience and 64 skill blocks to become a journeyman). The apprenticeship program has recently developed articulation agreements with three community colleges, which will award from 34 to 45 credits toward an Associate of Applied Science degree for completion of its skill blocks.

St. Louis' unions support their apprenticeship programs through a wage checkoff of 30 cents an hour. According to the individuals we interviewed, the unions spend between $12 million and $15 million a year on the programs, and have some of the best training schools in the country.

Resources

As shown in Exhibit 3, a variety of organizations—including labor unions, construction companies, the local home builder's association, and banks—contributed funds for SLW's first year of operation, providing a total of $150,000. The program also received:

- **Inkind contributions** valued at about $10,000 from the carpenters' union, including office space for the Executive Director;
- **A United Way grant of $30,000** for the math tutoring sessions; and
- **About $45,000** through its performance-based contract with EWGCC.

Its expenses include the Executive Director's salary, costs for drug testing ($50 per participant), orientation ($275 per participant), and recruiting. According to the Executive Director, "The real expense of the program is in recruitment." (As described below under

Exhibit 3. Organizations Contributing to SLW in 1998

Name	Amount
Alberici Construction Co.	5,000
Carpenter's District Council	40,000
Carpenter's Joint Apprenticeship Program	3,000
Commerce Bank	8,500
Home Builders' Association	50,000
Electrical Workers' Union	1,000
Mercantile Bank	6,000
NationsBank	5,000
Pipefitters' Union	1,000
Plumbers' Union	500
PRIDE	24,000
Ralston Purina	1,000
Community college school-to-careers program	1,500
Sheetmetal workers' union	1,500
Washington University	2,000
Total	**$150,000**

"Outcomes," although SLW recruited 600 candidates during its first year, only 64 entered apprenticeships.)

SLW was unable to draw down the full amount of funding allocated to it by EWGCC in 1998 for two reasons: (1) the program could not produce as many completers as EWGCC would have liked (Coordinating Council officials had hoped for a total of 1,000 over a five-year period, but SLW produced only 64 during its first year); and (2) the program received the performance-based funding only when participants achieved the benchmarks that EWGCC identified. This year, EWGCC modified its benchmarks somewhat to accommodate the seasonal nature of construction activities, and to help with SLW's cash flow.[5] SLW's Executive Director hoped

[5]The new benchmarks include: (1) taking math and drug tests (regardless of whether or not the individual passes); (2) completing orientation; and (3) being placed and retained in a job for periods of 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, and 12 months.

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that, in 1999, the program would be able to draw down $100,000 from EWGCC, although it will have to produce 140 completers in order to do so. He also wanted to increase the program's total budget to about $400,000, including contributions from all agencies that are currently involved, $30,000 from United Way, and another $250,000 from new sources.

Outcomes

In 1998, 300 individuals completed the program's initial screening process. About half of these failed entry-level math tests, and an additional 60 did not pass required drug screening.[6] (As noted earlier, however, about 75 percent of participants are now passing the math tests.) Of approximately 100 who completed orientation, 64 obtained apprentice positions in the construction trades. Fifty-nine of these individuals were minorities, and 15 were women. Most (about 55) were working at the time of our visit in spring 1999, or planning to return to work as soon as weather conditions permitted.

Apprentice carpenters earn starting wages of $11.59 an hour; after 250 hours of work, they are eligible for all union benefits. Journeymen receive $23 an hour, with a benefit package valued at more than $5.50 per hour. Career opportunities include not only work as journeymen (in either the area where they live or in other parts of the country), but also the potential to become a project manager, superintendent, or contractor.

As part of its overall evaluation effort, EWGCC is tracking the progress of participants in all of its programs, including those served by SLW. The Coordinating Council had just completed its first round of data collection at the time of our visit, and results were not yet available. Outcome data, however, will include the information shown in Exhibit 4.

The SLW board member responsible for program evaluation indicated that he would like to see the results of EWGCC's first-round data collection before making decisions about additional activities. He speculated, however, that areas for further investigation might include:

- *Identifying the best recruiting sources*, and determining why they worked best.
- *Evaluating the effectiveness of the math tutoring program*, and identifying ways to improve it.

[6] SLW did drug testing for its first class at the end, rather than the beginning, of orientation. The program changed its policy, however, after 50 percent of completers failed to pass drug tests.

Exhibit 4. Outcome Data Collected by the Casey Initiative

Performance milestones	**Placement, wages, and benefits**
Number recruited	Job titles
Number passing entry-level math test	Average wage
Number beginning orientation	Number placed with each employer
Number completing orientation	Number with family health coverage
Number placed in employment,	
Number employed for 3, 6, 9, and 12 months	
Attrition	**Advancement**
Number leaving the program	Wage increase on current job
Reason for leaving (transportation, child care, Alcohol/drug, or criminal justice problems; Other, unknown)	Benefit increase on current job
	Both wage and benefit increase on current job
	New job with wage increase
	New job with benefit increase
	New job with both wage and benefit increase
	Moved from part-time to full-time status

- **Examining student's perceptions about drug testing.** Although apprentices know that they will be subject to random drug testing after they begin work, some still fail the tests, perhaps because they believe that they can mask positive results in one way or another.
- **Considering whether the type of job placement** (e.g., small or large job, residential or commercial) makes a difference in retention, and whether there are some critical points for intervention.

It would be interesting, he suggested, to compare the performance of TANF recipients and others in the program, in order to learn whether there were benefits to segregating or combining the two populations.

Implications

The experience of SLW offers a number of lessons concerning the context in which welfare-to-work programs operate, their organizational structures, the services they provide, the resources they require, and the outcomes they produce, including the following:

- **A thorough analysis of the local labor market** may be essential for program success. The individuals we interviewed had first-hand knowledge about the shortage of construction workers in the St. Louis area. Some cautioned that SLW's model might not be successful in a different labor market, or if the economy took a downturn. One noted, however, that all unions — including those in right-to-work

states — could strengthen their bargaining positions by offering employers good candidates for entry-level jobs.

- **An organizational structure that includes all key stakeholders** may also increase the program's chances of success. The Partnership's board comprises not only unions and employers, but also banks that finance construction projects, economic development entities responsible for attracting new businesses, city and county officials, and community-based organizations interested in housing for low-income residents. Thus, the group of more than 30 includes (as one board member put it) "... all who face the impact of failure in one way or another."

- **Policymakers and program developers may need to pay more attention to the role of fathers.** One of the individuals we interviewed pointed out that fathers are not likely to support their children financially if child support policies create economic disincentives, or if they do not make a living wage. Another observed that, as more mothers go to work, responsibility for day care is increasingly falling to fathers.

- **Programs that provide vocational education services to TANF clients may need to offer more than one "track"** to accommodate individuals at varying stages of readiness for work. Although SLW implemented only a one-week orientation, initial plans called for a second "track," lasting two to six months, that would accommodate individuals who are less job ready. Several respondents suggested that, especially as the program worked with increasing numbers of "hard-to-serve" individuals, preemployment and "work readiness" services might become more critical. SLW's strategy, however, may be to build cooperative relationships with other agencies that can provide these services, rather than to provide them itself.

- **By familiarizing applicants with the requirements of specific jobs,** education and training programs can offer important benefits to employers. High wages in the construction industry may attract individuals who do not understand that the work is physically demanding and sometimes seasonal, and that it may require travel. By informing applicants about both the advantages and disadvantages of careers in construction, SLW was able to provide employers with a pool of "screened" entry-level workers who were likely to be satisfied with their jobs and to justify the employer's investment in their training.

- Education and training programs that serve TANF clients might **consider targeting entry-level jobs that do not require transportation.** St. Louis' WorkLink addressed transportation issues in an innovative way: by training participants only for jobs that were within walking distance of a light rail or bus station. One respondent speculated that, once individuals gained work experience through such jobs, they might be better prepared to advance to union apprenticeship programs.

- Employment and training programs can benefit their clients by **establishing linkages with secondary and postsecondary programs.** The coordinator of the Carpenters' Joint Apprenticeship Committee recommended that welfare-to-work programs coordinate their services with those of school-to-work initiatives at the secondary level. The carpenters' apprenticeship program has recently established articulation agreements in which several community colleges will award academic credit toward

an Associate in Applied Science degree for its skill blocks. These agreements, the coordinator noted, will help construction workers gain access to further education at locations convenient to their homes, providing an additional "career ladder."

- **Carefully designed tutoring programs may help TANF clients meet program entrance requirements.** By designing a tutoring program specifically for apprentice carpenters, SLW was able to improve passing rates on the entry-level math test from 50 percent to 75 percent. The program accommodates participants' needs to find employment quickly by allowing them to attend only as many classes as they need.

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Steps to Success
Mt. Hood Community College
Portland, Oregon

Overview

Steps to Success ("Steps") is a collaborative partnership of education, training, employment, health, and social service organizations helping people who receive welfare benefits obtain the services necessary to become economically self-sufficient. Mt. Hood Community College administers the program at three college locations in the Portland area — the Thompson Center, the Portland Metropolitan Workforce Training Center and Washington County Employment and Training Consortium, Capitol Center. Steps staff work closely with the local TANF agency to deliver employment preparation and training services that will "empower individuals to enter the workforce and support themselves and their families, improve their quality of life, and become a viable force in the community." To this end, Steps offers vocational assessment and training, adult basic education and GED preparation, "job club," work experience, and career and life planning services. In addition, Steps helps bridge the gap between "the understaffed employer and the transitional employee" by recruiting, screening, and referring workers to employers, and providing post-employment retention services. These efforts "have brought together hundreds of qualified applicants with successful employers," according to program materials.

Context

State

The mission of the Adult and Family Services (AFS) division of the Department of Human Resources, Oregon's TANF agency, is to "help families become self-supporting while assisting them with their basic needs." In the late 1980s, AFS began to shift its focus from determining eligibility for welfare benefits to helping families move toward self-sufficiency. These efforts established the state as a forerunner in welfare reform. The agency designed and continues to implement a labor market attachment model, in which all clients participate in job search upon application for services, for the purpose of providing "both immediate support and a start on the path to economic independence." During the 45-day assessment period, AFS staff

work with the family applying for benefits to assess level of job readiness and to identify and address immediate needs and other issues, such as medical care, housing, and domestic violence, that stand in the way of employability. Depending upon family circumstances, a family's Employability Development Plan (EDP) may call for a combination of work search, job training, and treatment. AFS programs that provide such services include:

- Assessment — services and supports put in place in 1998 to help applicants find employment or other resources and thereby avoid going on welfare;
- "JOBS" — Oregon's welfare-to-work program of employment preparation, training, placement, and job retention services for people receiving welfare cash benefits; and
- JOBS Plus — a special component of the JOBS program which places TANF clients in on-the-job training positions with businesses and agencies and pays them subsidized wages, rather than cash assistance, each month.

Respondents noted that while early welfare-to-work efforts were able to place most applicants immediately into job search activities, increasing numbers of families have multiple and complex barriers to employment. Nearly 27,000 Oregon families have left welfare since March 1994, according to program materials; AFS case managers now work with clients who are "harder to serve." In addition to other issues, clients may exhibit substance abuse, mental illness, and job history challenges. This trend will require a shift in AFS services from the job search emphasis toward a menu of options for families who require public assistance, respondents said.

Another shift in Oregon's welfare-to-work approach associated with reduced caseloads is the new emphasis on providing resources to prevent families from having to enter, or re-enter, the welfare rolls. AFS and its contractors now provide services for TANF applicants, as well as recipients, through its assessment program.

A 1998 AFS report on welfare reform documented that the caseload of two-parent and single - parent households receiving welfare cash assistance had decreased by 60 percent since March 1994. Ninety-three percent of families who left welfare in Oregon had not returned after 18 months, and the average wage for people coming off of welfare was over $7 per hour.

Local

Steps to Success provides a broad array of services designed to meet the diverse needs of Washington and Multnomah county families. This area (AFS District 2) encompasses over one million residents including those in Portland, Oregon's largest city. About 12 percent of the

population falls below poverty level, according to 1990 Census data. More than half (61 percent) of the residents in poverty are women; a third are African Americans. Eighty-five percent of the district's TANF clients are single mothers.

The Portland area was one of the first districts in the state to implement Oregon's labor attachment approach to welfare-to-work in the late 1980s; the district piloted AFS' JOBS program under the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). The state expanded JOBS statewide in 1990, based on the pilot's positive results. Outcome tracking and research have documented its success. Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation's 1998 study, for example, found Portland's JOBS program to be highly effective in moving people off welfare and into jobs with potential for increased earnings. Currently, according to program materials, "7500 Portlanders have returned to work, contributing more than 101 million dollars annually to the community in wages" over the last seven years.

A primary JOBS contractor for over 10 years, Mt. Hood Community College in Portland was part of the JOBS pilot, which led to Steps to Success. According to a 1997 report, Steps serves more than 12,000 welfare applicants and recipients annually. The program's array of services includes vocational training to prepare participants for clerical and other office employment, based on labor market trends indicating that nonfarm employment continues to increase and service sector jobs in medium to small businesses are on the rise.

Organizational Structure

Mt. Hood Community College is the prime contractor for the JOBS program in AFS District 2. Mt. Hood oversees Steps to Success at the Thompson Center in the southern part of the district, and subcontracts with Portland Community College to provide the Steps program at Portland Metropolitan Workforce Training Center in north/northeast Portland, and the Workforce Training Center in Washington County.

Public Agencies

Mt. Hood collaborates with state and local social service, education and employment agencies, as well as community-based organizations, to provide Steps in its three locations. Partners and collaborators include Portland Public Schools, Work Systems, Inc. (Portland's Private Industry Council), the Oregon Employment Department, the Housing Authority of Portland, the Oregon Tradeswomen Network, the Workforce Development Board, the Dislocated

Worker Project, State Offices of Services to Children and Families, the Portland Development Commission, Vocational Rehabilitation, and the local Chambers of Commerce. Administrators noted that Steps' collaborative organizational structure "has always been" in compliance with the Workforce Investment Act's (WIA's) list of mandated partners. Respondents also commented that the community colleges have been effective leaders in the welfare-to-work effort because they are able to bridge the training and welfare systems. Some key local service agencies are co-located on site at the Thompson Center and the Portland Metropolitan and Washington County Workforce Training Centers. AFS caseworkers staff an "outstation" at the Thompson Center, for example, and the Portland Metropolitan and Washington County Workforce Training Centers house local dislocated worker and vocational rehabilitation agencies in addition to Steps.

While some respondents said that decisions regarding Steps are collaborative across AFS and the community colleges, others at Mt. Hood said that AFS "takes the lead." AFS staff at the state agency level track outcome data for the purpose of identifying "emerging service needs," such as in the areas of job retention and learning disabilities. AFS then provides extra funding to pilot services to address identified areas of need.

Employers

The Steps to Success program involves employers in a "customer" relationship. According to program materials, Steps acts as an employment agency for local public and private organizations, at no cost to the employer. Employers can call Steps to request applicants to interview; Steps staff will screen applicants, send their resumes to employers, and schedule job interviews. Staff can also provide post-employment counseling and additional training services.

Some respondents noted the need for more depth in the Steps-employer relationship — to include, for example, involvement in program design and implementation for post-employment training needs. While the community is still adjusting to a downturn in the economy, and industry leaders have not fully emerged, staff have identified some possibilities for new partnerships with local businesses. Aramark, a leading food distributor in the area, may be interested in working with Steps to design child care training and employment opportunities to improve child care options for its employees, according to the Steps training coordinator. Steps staff would also like to work with industry to develop curricula and provide "in-house," post-employment training, as well as GED preparation, to help employees advance in their careers.

Services

Steps' primary purpose, according to program brochures, is to provide training and support for individuals who are in a "career transition" because of a change in the workforce or in their personal lives. As a JOBS contractor, Steps' employment preparation and retention services are to facilitate an efficient and effective transition, so that TANF clients can permanently leave public assistance. The Steps training coordinator said that client characteristics "run the gamut" of age, ethnicity, and social services history (in terms of years in the welfare system).

The Thompson Center, the Portland Metropolitan Workforce Training Center, and the Washington County Workforce Training Center provide an array of services to prepare TANF clients for permanent employment. Steps' staff work "one-on-one" with clients and collaborate with local AFS caseworkers to determine service and training opportunities that match goals and objectives listed on each client's Employment Development Plan. Respondents said that the client's area of interest, level of education, and level of experience guide planning. Options include services and training opportunities to prepare clients for general and specific employment, as well as job placement and support services that address barriers to employment and job retention.

General Employment Preparation

Steps provides classes and placement services to increase clients' general marketability to employers. Staff may recommend clients to participate in program activities such as:

- an "employability" class that combines life skills and basic skills with an introduction to the computer, especially for adults with reading difficulties; and
- a "career focus" workshop designed to help clients define a career track through motivation, goal setting, and skill investigation exercises.

In addition, Steps helps clients build a repertoire of work experiences. Staff may place clients in volunteer internships at public and private organizations to gain specific skills and new references, or recommend clients for "JOBS Plus" subsidized employment. Clients have access to job search resource rooms at all Steps locations, equipped with phones, message boards, computers, printers, a fax machine, and copiers. Staff track and post current employment listings on job boards at the centers.

Steps instructors also provide basic education services, including individualized and group learning activities for "brushing up" on mathematics and writing, and to prepare clients for the GED examination. The Thompson Center, the Portland Metropolitan and the Washington County Workforce Training Centers make their resource rooms, technology centers, computer labs, and adult learning centers available all day, Monday through Friday, for independent activities. Facilities are open Wednesday night and Saturday at the Thompson Center as well. Center schedules indicate that all of the program's classes are available on a regular basis.

Specific Employment Preparation

Steps provides several courses to increase computer skills for work in an office or other clerical environment. These include one-week courses that emphasize essential computer skills for the workplace, as well as information search on the Internet and large database management using Access. Two-week courses feature document, chart, and graph creation using Microsoft Word and Excel software. The "computer labs" are also open on a regular basis to facilitate engagement in supervised self-paced work.

Steps offers two six-week courses — "Office Basics" and "Office Trek" — that prepare clients specifically for entry-level and higher earning clerical employment. Office Basics is "geared to the student with little previous experience in office/clerical work," according to the program brochure. A variety of program staff provide instruction on the fundamentals of business writing, basic business English and arithmetic (spelling, grammar, punctuation, addition, subtraction, and multiplication), beginning keyboarding, beginning software applications (Windows and MS Word), life skills (to address personal employment barriers), and community resource awareness. Classes run 8:30-5:00, Monday through Friday, for the six-week period.

In order to apply for Office Basics, clients must participate in an orientation session and interview. Acceptance also requires that applicants achieve a minimum score on the BASIS test, complete an "addictions awareness" session, and obtain a signed Economic Development Plan (EDP) from their case managers, or approval from their career specialists. Program brochures state that clients must also demonstrate that they have arranged for "secure and reliable" child care and transportation, as attendance is mandatory. Office Basics does not require participants to hold a high school diploma or GED, nor must they demonstrate typing skills.

The course prepares participants for entry-level work in an office environment. Instructors emphasize keyboarding speed of at least 25 words per minute as a primary objective of the course, to increase the likelihood that participants will "reach the industry standard of at least 40 words per minute upon graduation," according to program materials. Office Basics allows participants to "see if the office clerical field is for them," plus learn skills that are transferable into other areas of employment, including warehousing and inventory. Staff encourage Office Basics graduates to apply for, but do not guarantee acceptance in, Office Trek. Brochures for the course also emphasize that orientation attendance does not guarantee acceptance, and that staff may need to place clients on a waiting list for the course. Staff noted that many Office Basics participants (more than half) go on to Office Trek.

Office Trek qualifies participants for higher-paying employment in the clerical field. Participants learn about business administration while focusing on such topics as the fundamentals of business writing, principles of business mathematics, beginning keyboarding, beginning software applications, business practices, and filing. As with Office Basics, a variety of instructors conduct the sessions. Participants learn MS Word, Excel, and PowerPoint; improve keyboarding speed and accuracy; develop telephone, time management, and customer service skills; increase written and verbal communication skills for the business context; and review math processes, such as calculating percentages and using decimals.

Steps clients who are interested in applying to Office Trek must attend an orientation meeting where they may complete an application and an interview with Office Trek staff. Clients who are eligible to participate have a high school diploma or a GED (or be "ready to test"); minimum scores in reading, math, and writing on a basic skills test; a minimum typing speed of 20 words per minute; and approval from their case managers in the form of a signed EDP. In addition, clients must complete an "alcohol awareness module," a short-term training request, and a program questionnaire. All applicants must take a one-minute test to determine keyboarding speed and accuracy.

The Office Trek course takes place 8:30-5:00 Monday through Friday. A typical schedule of classes involves keyboarding from 8:30-9:30, office practices and business communication from 9:45-12:00, computer skills and business math from 1:00-3:00, and computer lab and career development from 3:00-4:30. As with Office Basics, attendance is mandatory; clients must arrange child care and transportation as a condition of acceptance into Office Trek. For Office Trek, participants must sign an attendance policy agreement, and keep attendance records that

they submit each week. Frequent or unexcused absences can result in termination from Office Trek and notice of noncompliance to AFS caseworkers, who can sanction cash assistance. The strict attendance policy intends to simulate and prepare participants for a wage-earning work environment. Clients must also agree that they will participate in job search at the end of the course in order to achieve the goal of the course, which is to obtain employment in the clerical field.

Participants must complete all class work successfully and submit work to instructors in order to earn a certificate of completion. Staff distribute the certificates during an end-of-course graduation ceremony. Steps staff said that Office Trek usually meets its maximum participant capacity of 18 students, and most graduate from the course.

Because some clients require additional preparation to qualify for better paying work in an office environment, Steps also offers a two-week session that links Office Trek and Office Basics courses. Staff designed "Customer Service Bridge" to reinforce keyboarding and computer skills and to introduce customer service and basic project management concepts. Customer Service Bridge readies Office Basics participants to apply for Office Trek, or to find a job that requires customer service skills in addition to basic clerical work (without Office Trek participation). The Bridge session addresses telephone manner and job expectations, and provides opportunities for self-paced skill building in language and math. Staff conduct the sessions from 9:00 to 4:00, Monday through Friday, for the two-week training period. As with other courses, clients must obtain approval from their case managers or career specialists, complete a short-term training request, and arrange for child care and transportation.

Steps staff are currently developing and piloting a post-employment short-term training course that would certify participants to "trouble shoot" software problems. The curriculum is based on industry standards for software customer service, and certification would command a higher wage than general clerical employment. Whereas Office Basics represents a "first level" of training, the coordinator explained, Office Trek represents the second level, and post-employment courses would provide the third level of training. Participants need all three levels of training to achieve an adequate rate of pay, according to the Steps training coordinator.

The training coordinator noted that the college previously provided longer-term training, including nine-month courses in office work preparation (in addition to the traditional two-year community college program). Steps designed short-term training courses in response to TANF, but has managed to increase preparation time by making this series of related courses available

(the Office Basics, Bridges, and Office Trek sequence). While District 2 could emphasize job search "up front" to move people off welfare when there was abundant work in the area, now they are "deeper into the caseload," and the electronics industry is no longer booming. Services must include training and education "up front" — immediately after the required 45-day job-search period — to qualify clients for entry-level work. Steps staff cannot begin training or fashion a client's individual program by linking courses without approval from AFS, however. Whether or not individuals can become involved in various training opportunities "depends upon what their caseworker says," according to respondents.

Steps instructors said that they could improve the courses by more accurately modeling an office environment. This would mean using authentic, problem-based learning methods grounded in business applications. Instructors also said that they would like to work together to integrate topic areas in order to simulate the multi-faceted nature of business projects. Because instructors are part-time, and typically are not compensated for planning or meetings, it is difficult to collaborate with other instructors. Some said that developing relationships with businesses helps instructors to design curricula that are pertinent to work.

Job Placement

Near the completion of their training, clients meet with their case managers to identify "next steps." Meetings may involve family members and Steps staff in addition to the client and the caseworker. The soon-to-be graduates develop personal plans and mission statements, in a "business proposal" format, to guide their new career paths. The plans contain goals for employment and self-development, including education (such as GED completion) and a personal budget. During the "next steps" meeting, participants discuss resources clients will need to implement the plan. Resources may include support from AFS for additional training. Participants set a date for a "follow-up" meeting to review progress.

Career placement specialists help clients and employers through the transition from training to employment. The specialist assesses clients' work styles and preferences in order to determine each individual's optimal work environment. The specialist also works as a job developer, tracking labor market changes and employment opportunities in the district, and maintaining relationships with employers. "We look for jobs with benefits, advancement potential, and pay of at least $10 an hour," staff said. Staff call employers to suggest placing a client, or receive calls from employers requesting a client to interview. "Employers work with

me," one specialist explained. "They trust my judgment" in matching employer needs with client skills and style. After clients find work, employers and employees may also call career development specialists for help in resolving issues that threaten job retention.

Because training programs such as Office Trek are full time and attendance is mandatory, graduates cannot begin work until they have completed the training. This is sometimes a problem, according to staff, because clients become anxious to earn a salary. Staff said that they require program completion because most clients are more successful in an employment situation after they receive the benefits of the full training.

Additional Services

The training and support centers that house Steps give clients access to additional services. Other agencies and professionals in the centers offer, under contract with Steps or as independent agents, mental health, alcohol, and drug treatment. The centers house other programs that clients may use as well, such as Head Start and holistic health improvement. To illustrate the range of options available at the centers, the Thompson Center schedule listed: ABE/GED Orientation, Metro Child Care Referral and Consultation, Mandatory Job Log Review, Introduction to the Employment Department, Bridge to Work, Success at Work, Marketing your Skills, and Parenting. The Thompson Center was also open on Saturdays with services and classes for both adults and their children. A sample schedule of Saturday events included, for example, classes on money management, career planning, workplace ESL, and Alcoholics Anonymous for adults; activities for children included Adventures in Science, family computer lab, and "popcorn and a movie."

The Portland Metropolitan Workforce Training Center also listed workshops in "life skills." "We do group activities where we compare credit card companies," an instructor explained. "We do car-buying exercises. We talk about what you actually pay for a car over the 48 months of financing. We teach clients to keep at it when they call places to get information." Other resources available through the center were the Dress for Success program that provides clients with new clothing, from sponsors such as Macy's, for interviewing with a potential employer. The center also organizes Job Fairs, which employers attend, with information about various careers and applications for employment with their companies.

Resources

Funding

TANF dollars are the primary source of funding for Steps through the AFS JOBS program. In addition, the program receives some state funds, and some JTPA Title III resources for serving dislocated workers. Recently, the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration awarded grant money to community colleges, including Mt. Hood, for an 18-month project to place people from the welfare system into high-demand occupations where there are employment needs. A collaborative effort of the National Association of Private Industry Councils, the American Association of Community Colleges, and Instruction Systems, Inc., the project will provide on-the-job training in computer skills while trainees receive a paycheck. The college was slated to share in $4.9 million with 10 other community colleges. These secondary sources of funding add to the primary AFS contract and the overall budget for Steps. A 1997 report states that Steps' total annual operating budget is approximately $6.7 million (Mt. Hood Community College, 1997).

Reduced caseloads raise questions about resource use, according to administrators. With fewer needs for "up front" job search services, programs will need to provide support for participants who have recently joined the workforce. Employment retention and career enhancement are clear priorities, respondents said, because while former welfare recipients are now working, welfare-to-work efforts have not reduced poverty. It is not clear whether programs can use existing resources, such as staff hired for JOBS, to assist former recipients with employment retention and advancement. Staff would also like to commit more resources to the employment barriers that "don't just go away," such as lack of a high school diploma, special learning needs, and domestic violence.

Steps participants continue to receive TANF benefits, including transportation and child care allowances, while in the training program. This arrangement prevents participants from leaving the program due to financial difficulties, according to Steps materials. AFS, through case managers housed at Steps, can provide support for child care, transportation, and employment-related expenses such as work tools and uniforms. The maximum payment rate for TANF cash benefits to qualified families is $503 per month for a family of three.

Personnel

Steps to Success staff include two regional co-directors to oversee the entire program and a training coordinator who is responsible for programs including Office Basics and Office Trek across locations. Over 15 training and education course instructors were listed on program materials. Respondents said that instructors' backgrounds include training and experience in vocational education, vocational rehabilitation, and social work. Career placement specialists maintain linkages with community employers.

While most Steps staff are Mt. Hood Community College employees, some instructors and some service providers, such as Alcohol and Drug Assessment Specialists, work under contract with the college. Others, such as AFS caseworkers who serve clients at Steps, are employees of their own agency working in collaboration with the college to provide the program. Respondents noted that staff roles "blend" and that clients generally would not be able to differentiate between AFS caseworkers, instructors, and career development specialists in terms of organizational affiliation. Daily communication and a shared commitment to the students help staff work as a cohesive team, an approach that builds trust and respect among both staff and clients, respondents added. "We model applied communication and good professional working relationships," one instructor said. "We let them see what people look like 'getting along.'" The climate allows clients to speak openly about personal issues that impede progress, such as domestic violence and substance abuse. The climate of trust also builds confidence in clients who may not have had a positive educational experience prior to Steps.

Outcomes

Steps to Success measures performance by outcome indicators such as number of placements, clients served, and caseload reduction. As of June 30, 1998, Steps had placed 5,856 clients, served 14,608 participants, and reduced the caseload by 1,050. The average wage at placement was $6.61 per hour and the recidivism rate was 11.43 percent.

Staff also measure progress by the changes they see in clients' skill levels and in their personal demeanor. Participants leave Office Trek able to keyboard at the rate of 40-60 words per minute, and most have employment to begin "the Monday after graduation." Graduates present their career plans using audiovisual technology at the end-of-course completion ceremony as a display of their newly acquired PowerPoint skills. "The changes are impressive," staff commented. "They may be rough around the edges" when they begin the program, but

clients gain confidence and become increasingly focused. By graduation "we send them out polished," respondents said. Ninety-eight percent of Office Trek graduates reportedly retain employment.

Participants described their progress in terms of professional skills and personal changes as well. The course not only provides computer skills, they said, it increases confidence in one's ability to "have a career." "I'm a lot smarter than I thought I was," commented one participant who said she had not worked for 20 years. Another participant who had "been on welfare for 11 years" added, "They taught me how to be a person." Participants attributed positive experiences with the program to instructors and caseworkers who, they said, are "personable," but "push us to learn new things, about computers and about ourselves."

According to program materials, Steps has placed employees with over 75 large companies and small firms throughout the Portland metropolitan area. Such industries and businesses include Nabisco, Pendleton Woolen Mills, Sears Product Services, Frito-Lay, Shilo Inns, American Sand and Gravel, Quick Print, and Liberty Northwest Insurance Corporation. By hiring Steps participants, employers contribute to a "positive company image and the economic well being of the community," while gaining "positive, motivated, and skilled employees" who help them meet Affirmative Action requirements. Employers report that Steps has sent them well-screened, trained, and qualified personnel who are "confident, skilled, and professional in demeanor." The vice president of a local sign business reported that his company had hired three employees in five years through Steps.

Implications

Steps to Success works because it meets the needs of the legislature, clients, and the community, including its employers and labor market, according to the Steps training coordinator. Steps' creators considered each of these perspectives when designing the program, to include AFS' time limits, client potential, employers' personnel needs, and labor market trends. The community college, as a linking agent between various systems of welfare, education, and health helps Steps meet the demands of its multiple audiences. Cross-system services have become critical to client success in the workplace in recent years, the training coordinator noted.

"Love your TANF agency," was the advice one Steps administrator gave to other training and education providers. Educators must meet social services "halfway" to serve families making the transition off, or avoiding entry into, the welfare system. Collaboration does not just mean receiving funding; it also means letting other agencies provide the services they know how to provide. "We spread ourselves too thin" by trying to meet all families' needs through one service delivery system, the respondent explained.

Respondents said that Steps should continue to broaden its impact in order to help clients who are "harder to serve." "We do a good job with individuals, but could do a better job of assisting the other people in the client's life," including children and other relatives in the house, according to the training coordinator. "We could be more family-focused." The program at the Thompson Center offers more "family-friendly" services, including extended hours for adults, as well as child care and activities for children on Saturdays. Respondents reiterated that education services for clients with learning disabilities is another area with room for improvement, and added that health services might be more involved as well.

As the client base becomes "harder to serve" because of multiple and more complex employment barriers, staff must also provide post-employment services. Steps' career placement specialists are doing this by building long-term relationships with employers, as well as with clients, so that neither party will hesitate to contact the staff person about a problem after employment. The coordinator said that the average client works 2.7 jobs before settling into an employment situation. Steps would like to reduce that number by hiring additional career placement specialists who will focus on job retention in the client's first or second job placement. Administrators were confident that Steps would continue to evolve, and that staff would continue a tradition of "experimentation" to devise new ways to meet families' changing needs.

Factors that contribute to success from a state perspective, as described in AFS' 1998 report on welfare reform, reflect Steps' findings. AFS attributes its success to partners, such as the community colleges, that provide direct services to clients and whose staff "take an active role" in working with AFS case managers and their clients. The report also noted that local programs have successfully found partners to implement AFS' requirement for clients to participate in alcohol, drug, or mental health treatment, if necessary, for employment preparation. In addition, AFS, not unlike Steps, considers itself to be a risk-taking, learning organization, which puts new methods into action and makes data-based decisions. AFS and its partners are

reportedly "looking at new ways" to help harder-to-serve clients. As the caseload shrinks, AFS and its partners plan to establish new partnerships to provide special services and support to the "more than half of families on welfare with domestic-violence issues," according to the AFS report (1998). Agencies also plan to work together on a prevention approach that will address factors that contribute to welfare dependence, such as teen pregnancy and juvenile crime. Also, in terms of "next steps," AFS will move toward "family case management," wherein AFS case managers serve all the needs of the household, rather than target the needs of the head of the household.

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